Between the Whines: Paul Krassner on the Writers Congress

INQUIRY

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INQUIRY®

DECEMBER 7 & 21, 1981

Running from the Refugee Police

LARRY ESTRIDGE **p. 12**

At home, Salvadoreans are maimed and murdered. Here we just lie to them, jail them, and keep them on the run.

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Democrats in drag. We may never see the likes of Chuck Percy again, praise Allah. Liberal Republicans are a dying breed. (*ALAN CRAWFORD*)

Wolfman Ron. Our Leader wants to play disc jockey to the disco-mad Cuban masses—to the tune of $10 million a year. (*JEFF STEIN*)

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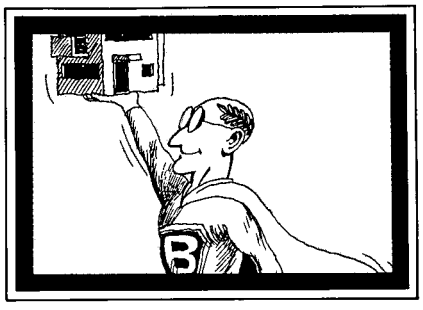

Marina Warner on *Eminent Victorian Women*, by Elizabeth Longford; Alan Gowans on *From Bauhaus to Our House*, by Tom Wolfe; Peter Stansky on *W. H. Auden*, by Humphrey Carpenter; X. J. Kennedy on *The Oxford Book of American Literary Anecdotes*, edited by Donald Hall; Edward W. Said on *Kipling and Conrad*, by John A. McClure.

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Cover illustration by CHRIS HANSEN; Calligraphy by JOHN PRESTIANNI. *Typography by* MACKENZIE-HARRIS *and* SOLOTYPE

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A WORD FROM THE PUBLISHER

THIS ISSUE, THE FIRST of volume five, is also my last as publisher of *INQUIRY*. I am proud to have been associated with this magazine since its inauguration. *INQUIRY*'s uniquely libertarian editorial perspective, the high quality of its contributors, and the talent of its editors have made it one of the foremost magazines in its field. It will continue to be that under its new publisher, Chris Hocker, who will oversee *INQUIRY*'s operations at its new location in Washington, D.C. While we were able to persuade the majority of the editorial staff to leave San Francisco for Washington, we will be leaving behind some valued and dedicated friends who have helped make *INQUIRY* the magazine that it is. In particular, we will miss Susan Strotman, our pleasantly dictatorial production manager; Wendy Schwartz, our very talented art director; Blake Hallanan, our ace researcher; and Bob Thompson, our cunningly effective managing editor. So, loyal reader, I now join you in looking forward to a future for *INQUIRY* as bright as its past.

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DANA GIOIA, Poetry

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RES PUBLICA

The secretary of euphemism

■ The Reagan Administration's fiscal euphemist has been run to ground. He is Lawrence A. Kudlow, who says he coined "revenue enhancement," the euphemism for tax increase used by the White House last month.

Mr. Kudlow, the chief economist of the Office of Management and Budget, is defiantly unrepentant. "I gave them another one, 'receipts strengthening,' " he boasted today. . . .

Why didn't the White House call a tax increase just that? "There's no better way to sell economic theory than by the euphemistic route," he says.

—New York Times, Oct. 21, 1981

How the West Wing was won

■ In the West, or office, Wing of the White House, the Reagan administration boldly returned those premises to "executive level 1 cleaning." . . . That means [among other things] that the mice that plagued previous administrations are now gone, finally and irrevocably. . . .

In the great mouse battle, it is alleged, the Carter administration knuckled under to the Environmental Protection Agency and used only anti-coagulants which took a month to kill a rodent. This administration uses something stronger and quicker.

Said John Rogers, the man in charge of such things in the West Wing: "It is important to show that we are not some Third World country."

—Sacramento Bee, Oct. 18, 1981

Top dollar top secrets

■ The Government's enormous investment in secrecy has now reached the point where the Defense Department alone receives nearly one million requests a year for security clearances for workers who would handle top secret and secret documents. The result is processing delays that could cost the Government almost $1 billion next year, by Federal estimate. The proposed solution, which cuts against the grain of the Administration's austerity budget, would be to find extra money to hire more Defense and F.B.I. investigators.

—New York Times, Oct. 19, 1981

There's an optimist in every crowd

■ [John Schmitz, a California state senator who is currently running for the U.S. Senate] said the country would be in bad shape if President Reagan failed to win congressional approval for [his economic] programs and added, "The best we could probably hope for is a military coup or something like that.

"Because if we slip back to Carterism we're finished, quite frankly," he said [during a television interview] Monday night.

One of the interviewers asked, "The best we can hope for is a military coup?"

"A good military coup," Schmitz replied. "Not a bad military coup, a good military coup."

—San Francisco Chronicle, Oct. 21, 1981

It takes one to know one

■ In his first press conference since he left the White House and in a brief appearance before the staff of the Democratic National Committee, [Jimmy Carter] dismissed the new administration as "an aberration on the political scene."

—Washington Post, Oct. 14, 1981

Good advice, on the House

■ [Former Congressman Ed] Beard spends much of his time behind the bar of his Central Falls, R. I., tavern, serving drinks and regaling customers with tales of Congress. Ever the politician, he says, "People still walk into this establishment and want me to help them with problems, like they did when I was in the House."

But mostly, he uses his congressional experience in an ironic way that benefits his new business. Says Beard: "In the Congress, they always ran into deficit spending. As a bartender, I need to show a surplus. Since I bought this place, I found out if you do just the opposite of what they do in Congress, everything will be great."

—U.S. News & World Report, Sept. 7, 1981

MXimizing profits

■ For two years, speculators have purchased large land parcels, hoping to be in the path of [the MX missile system, which] was trumpeted as history's largest public works project. Now they own exactly what they bought: raw desert. . . .

The evening the announcement [of President Reagan's decision not to base the MX in Nevada or Utah] was made, 325 Nevada real estate dealers were at a convention at Lake Tahoe. "I had to talk five or six of them from jumping off Hoover Dam," [Jack Matthews, president of the Nevada Association of Realtors] said, laughing. "They were walking around in shock." . . .

"I expected to make a minimum of 200 percent profit," [Margaret Sansone, a Las Vegas broker] said. "I'll be lucky now to make 20, 30, 40 percent."

—New York Times, Oct. 12, 1981

Nearer my bug to thee

■ The California Youth Authority has installed electronic eavesdropping devices at chapels in three of its correctional facilities in the Stockton area.

The Rev. C. E. Curtis, head of the 150-member Greater Stockton Ministry Association, said that the youth authority began installing the bugs in August while chaplains were on vacation. He said that the clergymen learned about the bugs when they returned, and they then complained to officials, who did not remove them.

—New York Times, Oct. 9, 1981

Steal this mill

■ The black-and-white documentary film blandly titled Hengshui Steel Mill is badly shot, awkwardly cut and scratchily narrated—but Peking audiences flocked to its premiere.

The movie depicts a spectacular tale of official corruption: the dismantling and illegal sale of an entire steel mill in Hebei province.

The audience at the Heavenly Bridge Theater laughed, gasped and murmured at the enormous scale of the scandal.

Factory managers made thousands from the sale of pipes and metal plate from the giant furnaces. . . . The officials sent relatives south on vacations and dined out in high style. . . .

Workers from surrounding neighborhoods built houses and chicken coops from fireproof blast-furnace bricks. Some were still engaged in looting, the narrator says, "even as we shoot!"

—Miami Herald, Oct. 3, 1981

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Let's ground the B-1

Flying pork barrel

IF ANYONE IMAGINED THAT THE REAGAN administration, with all of its tough talk on defense, ever had a rational strategic vision, that illusion should have been dashed by the President's October 2 announcement of plans for a new missile and bomber force. In a single policy statement, Reagan managed to contradict the entire rationale (the so-called "window of vulnerability") for his proposed strategic buildup, while asking that nearly $200 billion be spent over the next six years on strategic weapons aimed at the Soviets.

The administration has decided to go ahead with the MX but to scrap the "shell game," a lavishly expensive system of empty silos meant to fool the Soviets as to the real location of our missiles. By putting the MX in fixed silos, the administration has effectively admitted that it no longer acts under the dubious assumption that Soviet missiles are accurate enough to disarm our land-based force in a sneak attack.

Having thus tacitly admitted the survivability of our missiles on land (and sea), Reagan nonetheless went on to call for the production of 100 new B-1 subsonic bombers, while continuing development of the "stealth" bomber that will be the mainstay of the U.S. bomber fleet in the 1990s.

Reagan's B-1 decision made about as much sense as his decision to go ahead with the MX. Why build a new generation of heavy missiles if our old ones are now admitted to be perfectly adequate? And why build a new generation of bombers if, as many critics contend, they will be vulnerable to Soviet air defenses as soon as they are built, and outmoded by the new stealth bomber only two or three years later?

Even B-1 advocates admit that the bomber is hideously expensive. In this time of double-digit inflation and ballooning budget deficits, the administration expects to spend nearly $30 billion just on B-1 production—not to mention billions more down the road for operation and maintenance. These figures are probably on the low side, given the extraordinary record of cost overruns that the B-1's primary contractor, Rockwell International, piled up on the space shuttle.

But howls of pain from the taxpayer are music to the ears of Rockwell executives, who predict at least $400 million in profits on the contract over the next seven years. Since Rockwell is also the largest MX contractor and a major subcontractor for the Trident missile, it was hardly surprising that the company's stock shot up by 33 percent after the President's announcement. The B-1 alone will benefit more than 5000 other defense suppliers located in nearly every state in the union, virtually insuring congressional passage of the plan.

Jimmy Carter's decision in June 1977 to scrap the bomber was a rare act of good sense. The B-1 is simply too expensive for what it delivers. By the time it comes into production in 1986, it may not be able to pierce the increasingly sophisticated Soviet air defense network; new generations of Soviet radar and fighter planes have made the B-1 more vulnerable than ever. As former Defense Secretary Harold Brown puts it, "What you're saying is that you're going to spend 15 billion to 20 to 30 billion to be able to bomb the Bulgarians." As a "standoff" platform for launching cruise missiles, the B-1 is hardly better than the aging B-52s it would replace. And it is too expensive to use as a conventional bomber; each B-1 costs about the same as eight F-15s, the air force's most sophisticated fighter-bomber. Finally, a mere three years after production begins, it will be outmoded by the stealth bomber.

Indeed, as James Fallows and other defense critics have argued, a large, expensive bomber like the B-1 is exactly the wrong way to go. The larger it gets, the easier a target it becomes for the Soviets. On an actual mission, moreover, a B-1 crew would scarcely be able to find targets for all the thirty-odd weapons the plane carries before fuel shortages, Soviet retaliation, and air turbulence and dust storms from nuclear explosions forced the mission to abort. The B-1 could even *weaken* our defense because it diverts money from other defense programs—like replenishing the dwindling spare parts stocks that have grounded so many of the planes we already have.

What the B-1 program really comes down to is not defense but pretense. The Reagan administration is obsessed with the *show* of force and commitment, to make the Soviets and the rest of the world know we can't be pushed around. Thus Air Force Chief of Staff General Lew Allen, Jr., defended the B-1 as part of the administration's program "to confront the Soviet Union quickly with clear indications of the resolve and determination of the American people to match the Soviet threat and to show that resolve in an unambiguous way."

Pretense isn't good enough reason to spend $30 billion to $50 billion of the public's money—nor even $1 for that matter. What has been conspicuously missing from the debate over the B-1 is the rationale for *any* new bomber. The stealth bomber, after all, will be far more costly than the B-1, yet the need for it is rarely questioned even by critics of the B-1.

Manned bombers, once the only means of delivering nuclear bombs, have remained useful in the missile age because they offer a flexibility of command and control that land-based missiles cannot match. In a nuclear crisis, bombers can be recalled, but missiles cannot; and the vulnerability of land-based missiles to a first strike might encourage their premature use if there were no other nuclear "leg" to stand on. But nuclear submarines have essentially outmoded the bomber. They are invulnerable to enemy attack, they are accurate enough to hit all but the most hardened targets, and they are numerous enough to reduce the entire USSR to radioactive rubble. In a crisis they can be kept in reserve; sub-launched missiles need never be fired in panic. But submarines belong to the navy. Bombers are the air force's favorite pork barrel—and the battle our generals have always been best prepared to fight is the battle of the budget. ❑

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Why 'comparable worth' can't work

Wage wars

LORD KEYNES, IN A MOMENT OF RARE IN-sight, once observed that the world is ruled by the ideas of defunct economists. How right he was. And, in its June decision on *County of Washington* v. *Gunther*, the U.S. Supreme Court demonstrated that it is no different from the rest of the world.

In *Gunther*, the Supreme Court ruled that a group of women guards in Oregon had a right to bring a sex-discrimination suit because they were paid less than male guards. The twist is that the women did not contend that their jobs were "equal" to the men's, only that the jobs were "comparable" and that the women should be paid accordingly. This marks the first courtroom victory for the theory that jobs of comparable value should bring comparable compensation. Although the court said only that the women had the right to sue their employer under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and thus didn't award damages, feminist lawyers were elated. Civil-rights lawyer Eleanor Holmes Norton called the "comparable worth" doctrine "the issue of the eighties for women."

The theory holds that the value of jobs can somehow be calculated and that people doing jobs of comparable value, however different otherwise, should be paid comparable wages. Students of medieval economic doctrines will recognize here the theory of "just price"—the view that value, and consequently "just price," is objective, intrinsic in things, and independent of the person who values them. That doctrine was definitively refuted in the nineteenth century by the Austrian economist Carl Menger, who demonstrated that values are subjective, that is, they signify judgments made by specific persons about things. As Menger and his successors pointed out, market prices are really reflections of people's valuation of scarce resources, which can change over time.

The corollary most relevant to the *Gunther* case is that there can be no just price for anything apart from the market price (and wages are simply prices for labor services). Indeed, we can conclude that the market price *is* the just price since it is reached through voluntary exchange.

A typical argument for the "comparable worth" doctrine goes like this: "The job of nursing is at least comparable in value to that of truck driving. So why should nurses be paid less?" This sounds persuasive at first. But it runs aground on the question, "Of value to whom?" Different people will value nurses and truck drivers differently. Labor services are paid for by particular employers for particular purposes. If one employer is willing to pay a nurse $300 a week, of what relevance is it that someone else is willing to pay a truck driver $400 a week?

In offering wages, an employer is constrained on one side by what his competitors are offering and, on the other, by the nurse's output. The nurse is constrained by the alternatives available. If, other things being equal, a job pays more than the alternatives, the nurse will take it. What truck drivers are paid is irrelevant to her, unless the nurse regards truck driving as an alternative.

The upshot is that there are no grounds for saying that nursing, in some social sense, is of comparable value to truck driving. Some people are willing to pay more for an hour of nursing than for an hour of truck driving, some less. But market wages for each are determined in a supply-and-demand process made up of countless transactions.

It is nonsense to look at the pattern of wages produced by the process and call it "unjust." Nobody *determined* the outcome, as, for example, parents determine their children's allowance. The structure of wages is the result of a process in which millions of individuals obtain the services of others through bidding and trading.

True enough, the market is badly hampered by coercive labor legislation, restrictive licensing, "protective" regulations, and so forth, that force up the wages of some workers at the expense of other workers who can't find jobs or who must settle for second-best opportunities. Nevertheless, despite government intervention, the market process operates, communicating information through the price system, while compensating for political distortion. Government intervention needs to be attacked directly, not compounded by further manipulation of the price system.

So much for the economics lesson. There are other aspects of this issue that need exploration. Some feminists believe employers have forced women into low-paying jobs. As a conspiracy theory, it is implausible. If talented women are working as secretaries only because employers won't let them be executives, why hasn't some rebel employer, seeing a chance to make a killing, hired these women *as executives* for slightly more than their secretarial wages? He'd have every incentive to do so.

If, on the other hand, women have tended toward certain professions—say, nursing or secretarial work—by tradition, then legislation will not help them. In fact, "comparable pay" will encourage them to stay in traditional jobs. It will also cost some women their jobs, because the higher pay has to come from somewhere, and it will come from abolishing some jobs.

As Vivienne Killingsworth wrote recently in the *Atlantic Monthly*: "If generations of little girls have been encouraged by their parents to prefer nursing to tree-trimming, resulting in an oversupply of nurses relative to tree-trimmers (or doctors or secretaries), the result may well be an unfortunate economic situation for those who grow up to be nurses. But that doesn't mean nurses' employers are responsible for the situation, or that they should be forced to remedy the unfortunate results of the nurses' own choice of profession."

Killingsworth notes that when many women seek and enter higher-paying professions, "women's wages will rise not only on average but also in the erstwhile [low-paid job] ghettos, simply because fewer people will be seeking work there." But this kind of change cannot be accomplished by political decisions—that is, by coercion.

If women feel they must revise their traditional roles in marriage and work, they should do so, and reasonable people will wish them success. But if the revision is to succeed, it must not entail coercion. Forcing employers to pay women more will only create suspicion and cost some women jobs, along with many other unintended consequences. It is instructive to note that racist white labor unions in South Africa supported "equal pay for equal work" legislation because they understood that if prejudiced buyers of labor services have to pay the same wage to blacks and whites, they may as well indulge their prejudices and hire whites. The result was a loss of work for blacks struggling to get ahead.

Irrational prejudice is costly to employers competing in the marketplace. "Comparable pay for comparable work," ironically, makes employer discrimination less costly. And when you cut the cost of something, you tend to get more of it.

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LETTERS

Letters to the editor should be addressed to INQUIRY Magazine, 1320 G Street, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003. The editors reserve the right to edit letters for length when necessary.

Point . . .

HOW APPROPRIATE THAT Edmund Hanauer's "Israeli bombs and American opinion" [Oct. 19], a diatribe against Israel and a puff piece for the PLO, appeared on the week that PLO spokesmen rejoiced at the death of Anwar Sadat. The issue, which Mr. Hanauer somehow managed to overlook in his zeal to depict Israel as the villain of the Mideast melodrama, is not whether all of Menachem Begin's policies are wise and popular here or in Israel; the issue is whether the *only* pro-Western democracy in that turbulent region should be forced to negotiate with an entity whose sole corporate purpose is Israel's liquidation, and who delights in the murder of a peacemaker.

When Yasir Arafat and his friends show a fraction of the courage and foresight of an Anwar Sadat, instead of lobbing rocket shells into kibbutz nurseries, then Israel's supposed intransigence would be rightly criticized. Until the PLO abandons its deadly quest—assisted by Saudi funds and Soviet trainers—and recognizes Israel's existence, the American people would do well to be a mite forgiving if Israelis decline to participate in national suicide.

RICHARD G. LISKOV
Jewish American Political Affairs Committee
New York, N.Y.

. . . and counterpoint

AS I AM CERTAIN THAT YOU will receive plenty of hate mail from the Zionist lobby as a result of your article "Israeli bombs and American opinion" I am taking opportunity to express my support. Even though the author, Edmund Hanauer, took care to quote prominent Jews to support his contentions, it still took courage for the editors to publish such an article.

The attitude of the people in this country toward Israel is changing and you can have the satisfaction of being one of the few publications with the courage to state that this is occurring.

ROBERT X. BRENNAN
Branchville, N.J.

Planned obsolescence and ICBMs

RE YOUR ARTICLE ON MIS- sile bias [Oct. 5]: I think you may have missed the point of *Aviation Week* having printed the ICBM vulnerability article in its July 13 issue. As you say, this magazine is used for leaks and speaking the "party line." So I think that this particular article is a ploy to lobby for building many more missiles, and then waste them in tests, and then to refine further, and then build a whole new set to test again. What a wonderful and expensive governmental spending boondoggle which would feather the corporate nests of the whole missile industry. Knowing your ever watchfulness for a governmental power grab, I'm surprised that you folks missed this one which seems so obvious to me.

ALYN W. HESS
Milwaukee, Wisc.

Hard reading

ONE OF YOUR ARTICLES IN the Oct. 5 issue was very hard to read, but not because it was not well written and not because the subject matter was dull. On the contrary, it was written well and quite interesting. But the article, "Death at Kilometer 220," was hard for me to read because of the gruesome facts it revealed about Paraguay's treament of its Indians. Such horrid treatment is even more anguishing because there seems little we as individuals can do to stop it. Once again it points out the brutality and corruption of governments. One thing we can do is publicize it and expose it for the world to see—and so I commend *INQUIRY* for publishing such articles and hope there will be more stories like this that are "hard to read."

FRED FOLDVARY
Berkeley, Calif.

Another satisfied subscriber

MICHAEL McMENAMIN'S AR- ticle on the International Longshoreman's Association [Oct. 5] was a masterpiece! However, there were a few flaws. The most outrageous one was that you lumped all unions with the ILA and the Teamsters by stating that "a union is a *business* that *sells* its members services. . . ." (My emphasis.) Business? Union dues are IRS deductible expenses. And can you name one union that is listed on any stock exchange? And your editorial on PATCO: you may think that it was a fast editorial. In my opinion, it was a half-fast editorial. And Lane Kirkland does back PATCO even though the strike decision was made without AFL-CIO membership or advice. I can understand being NON-union, but to be ANTI-union is obscene. I am a retired member of the International Typographical Union. All our officers are elected biannually by secret ballot. And even Michael McMenamin and the writer of "Skyway Robbery" would be eligible to run for office in the ITU if they were members.

I have more respect for the little girl on Biscayne Boulevard in Miami who dresses in red shorts. At least there is something honest about her.

Please cancel my subscription!

CHARLES LEVINE
Miami, Fla.

WE'RE MOVING!

President Carter almost never listened to INQUIRY's advice. And President Reagan hasn't been a bit better. So we're moving east, right into the belly of the beast, to see if that won't help. Our new address, effective immediately, is **1320 G Street S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003.** *And our new phone number is* **(202) 547-2770**. *Otherwise we're the same savage but lovable magazine we've always been.*

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POLITICS

ALAN CRAWFORD

Democrats in drag

IT SAYS A GOOD DEAL ABOUT the fortunes of Republican liberals that they are now calling themselves "gypsy moths" after a species of caterpillar that did a record amount of damage this year alone, gobbling its way through nine million acres of trees from Maine to Maryland. Their human counterparts from New England and the Great Lakes region chose the insect pest as a namesake to distinguish themselves from the more celebrated "boll weevils," southern Democrats who broke with their own party's leaders this year to back the Reagan administration budget. The "gypsy moths" are rebels, too. Reeling aghast at the President's attempt to cut back Great Society programs, they've fought to restore the money, and with some success.

Led by luminaries like Millicent Fenwick of New Jersey, Bill Green and Hamilton Fish of New York, and Margaret Heckler of Massachusetts, they constitute "a minority of a minority," as David Broder calls them, parlaying that role "into a strong bargaining position." Though they have remained an ad hoc alliance and have yet to move toward becoming a formal caucus of the Congress, they represent a potential menace to the White House that cannot be—and isn't being—ignored. Increasingly vulnerable to other forces, however, they are realistic enough to see their political survival as inextricably linked to the White House, and they remain anxious to accommodate the Reaganites. For a price.

"The gypsy moth goes through a unique metamorphosis from worm to fly," says Lawrence DeNardis of Connecticut, "and I told [House Minority Leader Bob] Michel that we preferred not to remain as worms but to fly with the leadership—if we could get some help from the administration on the transition." That, of course, means money. As representatives of districts whose constituents oppose many of the budget cuts, they sought to restore some $4.8 billion, including money for Medicaid, guaranteed student loans, mass transit, and the arts, about half of which they got after meetings with Michel, an Illinois conservative.

It says something, too, about this group high-mindedness—and the degeneration of liberal Republicanism—that in September five gypsy moths urged the President to cut $20 billion from the Pentagon budget primarily, an aide to Michigan's Carl Pursell admits, because they feared that the shift in budget priorities from social spending programs to building bombs will "hurt" their own districts and "help" those of the booming Sunbelt. Only a few months before, they had persuaded the President, in exchange for their support on the budget fight, to order Budget Director David Stockman to accept a proposal by Pursell—unofficial head moth—to extend an agreement that channeled defense contracts to their own fiefdoms.

In any case, they can hardly be counted on as staunch supporters of Reagan's fiscal conservatism. Their support for the administration's modest assault on the federal behemoth was desultory at best, and as Congressman Edward Madigan of Illinois, chosen by Michel to act as liaison to the group, predicts: "If Stockman tries for another $20 billion in cuts next year, it will be very hard for them [to support him]." At press time, the administration had already begun to push for just that.

The years have not been good to self-described Republican "progressives," and it is not likely that things will get any better under the Reagan administration. The shrinking ranks of this political subspecies suggest as much about sweeping changes in party demography as they do about the breathtaking thickheadedness of these lemming-like pols; if they represent an endangered species they probably deserve the fate that awaits them—a fate that even a decade ago was considered unimaginable. Back then the future was assumed to belong to GOP liberals, who, after all, had dominated the party's presidential nominating conventions from 1940 to 1976, pushing Wilkie over Taft and Ford over Reagan, their nefarious deeds accomplished, Phyllis Schlafly has written, through the use of "secret kingmakers." The one time they lost control of a convention, in 1964, the party's right wing took such a vicious beating in the general election that it was assumed dead. The liberal faction was associated with the East, New York City, the banks, big business, and ultimately the Rockefellers. For years they contended with the conservatives in the party and generally won, giving rise within their opponents to bloodlust that is yet unslaked.

The liberals, William Rusher complains, were always a minority within the party, but it was a minority that "has always been large enough to compel a certain amount of compromise in its direction." This made it impossible for the right-wingers to "mount a convincing attack on the nonproducing liberal verbalists and their welfare constituency." The recent history of the party has been "little more than a record of the compromises made by conservative majorities . . . to appease a liberal minority whose sole effective function has been to insure the defeat of conservatism." The liberals are up to the same tricks again, of course, but with right-wingers in the White House they can be less than assured of success.

*BUT SOMETHING ELSE HAP-*pened along the way to kill off liberal Republicanism. For years the "progressives" of the Rockefeller coloration enjoyed the adoration of the liberal press, which upheld them as "respectable" conservatives to distinguish them from the frumpier and grumpier right-wingers. These were the guys, we were told, who didn't wipe their noses on their sleeves. But along came a new group of thoughtful, policy-oriented, and forbiddingly articulate individuals, many of them scholars out of the social sciences, who were explicitly conservative, gentlemen like Thomas Sowell, Irving Kristol, George Gilder, and Arthur Laffer. These were the neoconservatives, of course, men deeply skeptical of the aspirations of the Great Society, who commanded a new respect from the establishment media (in fact, many wrote for it), ultimately challenging the exclusive claims to respectability on which the "progressives" had dined out for years.

Who remembers the Ripon Society? And who remembers the last time it had anything to say? Ironically, when an articulate and reasoned opposition

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within Republicanism is perhaps most needed, the Capon Society (as its right-wing detractors used to call it) is virtually dumb, a victim, one suspects, of its own lack of political conviction or philosophical substance. Those on Capitol Hill that one would put in the Ripon circle—the feeble moths—appear to be little more than hacks and hackettes, acting in accordance with an ideology impossible to define outside the realm of the grubbiest self-interest.

Fittingly, they deny any ideological or philosophical raison d'être at all. They come together, they say, out of regional self-interest. "We are a group of congressmen from the Northeast-Midwest who are frankly disgruntled, and rightfully so, we believe, about the budget priorities of the administration, which we believe are tilted toward the South and the Southwest," says a spokesman from Pursell's office. "Unemployment isn't the problem there that it is in the East and Northeast, and the social programs aren't as needed there. Look, we lost sixteen seats to redistricting, and we lost them to the South. The budget seems to be shifted toward those districts, hurts ours and helps them."

The 'gypsy moths' are just hacks, with no ideology but grubby self-interest.

Is there any philosophical basis to the coalition's call for a reduction in defense spending? "We just believe that defense spending should go under the same scrutiny that social spending is going under, especially when the defense spending helps businesses in the Southwest," says Pursell's spokesman. (Such is the cravenness of these moths that even a timid and tentative self-definition like the one above is given only after solemn assurances of Deep Throat–style anonymity.)

Even if you accept the moths' own view—that they're a regional coalition and nothing more—they represent a GOP that has ceased to exist. Some come from older industrial cities where strong labor and Democratic party organizations have taken over the political machinery and the only Republicans who survive represent isolated silk-stocking districts. Others represent large concentrations of students and academics—Ann Arbor, East Lansing, Wellesley, and New Haven. A few are from safe suburban areas in New York, Connecticut, or Pennsylvania, the kind that voted for John Anderson.

In short, theirs is the party that went down with Nelson Rockefeller seventeen years ago in the Cow Palace: that of the privileged suburbs and the country club, Wall Street and the Business Roundtable. They may well embody the most irrelevantly reactionary impulse in American society since Students for Stassen. These Republicans are the political descendants of Teddy Roosevelt, people who believe in government health care for the poor so that they won't have to worry about catching some loathsome disease from their black servants. The Republican party has left them behind, and the gypsy moths—and their districts—are the last holdouts; the party's base has moved from the rich and upper middle class to what Vance Packard calls the "limited-success class" of white collar employees who, however poorly paid and low in status, still identify with management rather than labor.

The party has changed hands, and is now that of the raucous New Right, if not the Great Silent Majority. Meanwhile, the Democrats have made steady inroads into the high-income suburbs and the booming "knowledge sector," whether the industrial research parks ringing Cambridge, Massachusetts, the public schools of Indianapolis, or the high-tech industries of southern California. Entire districts are switching over. Take Bill Green's silk-stocking district, which stretches from midtown Manhattan to Greenwich Village. Once solidly Republican, the New York 2nd is more and more populated by New Class liberals in the communications industry, who went for McGovern in New York's 1972 Democratic primary. The last Republican to represent them was John Lindsay; he was succeeded by Democrat Ed Koch, a product of the reform Democrats of the Village. Snobbery more than ideology accounts for liberal support of Republican "progressives." Despite philosophical commitment to the Democrats, educated New Yorkers traditionally have remained aloof from Democratic politics, which they associate with grimy bossism, and prefer untainted patrician Republicans.

EVEN MORE ELEGANT THAN Green is Millicent Fenwick. Her New Jersey district, in stark contrast to the working-class bars and grimy streets immortalized by Bruce Springsteen, ranks eleventh of the nation's 435 congressional districts in median income. Fenwick's turf includes real turf—elegant horse country. It was represented from 1925 to 1952 by a relative of industrialist Cyrus Eaton, one of several plutocrats it sent to Congress. Recently deified on CBS's "60 Minutes," Fenwick is a regal old gal who worked as a New York fashion model and *Vogue* magazine editor before running for office in 1974.

Hamilton Fish represents New York's 24th District, whose voters have sent Ham Fishes to Congress since 1842, though previous swimmers in this aristocratic little school were ardent isolationists who hated the New Deal almost as severely as they disdained FDR, viewed by the clan as a ruddy plebe. Fish, elected in 1968, got 18 of a possible 100 points from the National Taxpayers Union in its most recent rating.

Pursell can't brag of such elitist origins but his Michigan district, once solidly Republican and conservative, includes the largest proportion of college students among eligible voters of any district in the nation. It includes Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti and also went for McGovern, a direct result of the surge in funds for higher education. First elected in 1976 by only 344 votes, Pursell has kept his seat with the endorsement of the United Auto Workers, which isn't likely to extend it again. UAW spokesman Sam Fishman says Pursell is "voting more and more the Reagan line. We're just going to let him dig that hole a little deeper and then we're going to blast him."

We are witnessing, it seems clear, the last hurrah of that long line of high-minded Republican losers that included Rockefeller, Elliot Richardson, Ed Brooke, Jake Javits, George Romney, and William Scranton, the latter re-

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ferred to by William F. Buckley, Jr., as "the last hiccup of the Establishment's IBM Machine." Buckley of course is correct: Each in turn has been a hiccup of the establishment and little else, however much they have been hyped as the Great White Hopes of Republican responsibility (read: paternal liberalism). When Caligula "had his horse made a consul at least he intended it as an affront to the Roman people," Henry Fairlie once wrote. "The astonishing fact is that, in advancing their names for the presidency of the United States in the past quarter of a century, some of the liberal Republican leaders have believed they were bestowing an honor."

Javits, Brooke, and Clifford Case, excoriated by Rusher for their "purely nominal Republicanism," are all gone now, leaving in the Senate only Charles "Chuckles" Percy, the tiresome name-dropper ("He always seems to preface everything with 'I talked to David Rockefeller' or 'I talked with Henry Kissinger, and . . . '" says a Democratic colleague) who recently rankled the White House by supporting the PLO in secret talks with the Soviets and voting against the Lefever nomination.

None of this pleased the Reaganisti, especially considering that Percy gave $500 to the presidential candidacy of the equally high-minded Anderson. Percy blandly explains, "I didn't endorse him," which recalls former Illinois Senator Paul Douglas's comment that Percy is the first politician to raise vacillation to "the level of a moral principle." Winning reelection only after telling voters he'd "gotten the message," pledging to "stop the waste, cut the spending, cut the taxes," Percy promptly demonstrated his new conviction by helping secure federal money for a home-state coal gasification plant.

Liberal Republicanism is a political subspecies with a fading constituency, and the future of the entire swarm—gypsy moths and all—is in serious danger: if not today, then certainly tomorrow. Disgruntled Democrats, who'd rather have their own in office, are already stockpiling political DDT. So, you may be sure, is Terry Dolan at National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC) and other Orkins of the New Right. Their money, in any case, will be wasted. These are politicos whose number is up. Time itself will exterminate them, if NCPAC doesn't first. Former Representative Bob Bauman, in happier days, called them "Democrats in drag." Rude jokes aside, he was probably right.

POLITICS

JEFF STEIN

Wolfman Ron

EVERY FRIDAY MORNING, 80-year-old Herminio Portell-Vila, once a lawyer in pre-Castro Cuba, pads into his Capitol Hill office and taps out another script. His tape-recorded mix of news and stinging sarcasm is rushed to the Boston, Virginia, offices of the pro-military American Security Council, where it is edited and reproduced for broadcast on some twenty-three domestic and foreign radio stations, from Chicago to the Andes. At noon each day, Portell-Vila also stands by the telephone in his office waiting for a call from WQBA radio in Miami, a station with close ties to veterans of the Bay of Pigs invasion. The station, which can be heard in much of Cuba, airs whatever happens to be in Portell-Vila's mind that day. After fourteen years of tossing barbs at Fidel Castro, the popular expatriot broadcaster has become somewhat of a Paul Harvey for the anti-communist Latin audiences of the Western Hemisphere.

In addition to Portell-Vila's broadcasts, moreover, a handful of commercial stations in Miami, New Orleans, Atlanta, and other southeastern U.S. cities reach into Cuba with regularly featured anti-Castro rhetoric, news of communist setbacks on the island, and call-in shows that let exiles gripe freely about Fidel.

Yet with all that commercial American radio available (and popular) in Cuba, not to mention the official Voice of America, the Reagan administration wants to spend $10 million to set up "Radio Marti," a government propaganda operation beamed at Cuba and modeled on Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. Apparently, the White House is unwilling to let the free market handle the chore. "This administration has decided to break the Cuban government's control of information in Cuba," national security adviser Richard Allen declared September 23, although as a kind of black irony, the administration recently invoked the Cuban assets regulations to crack down on the export to Cuba of American newspapers and magazines. The White House evidently doesn't want any competition for its radio show.

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The $10 million budgeted for Radio Marti appears wildly extravagant. Bill Viands, president of the South Florida Broadcasters Association and a conservative who favors the operation, wrote a letter to Reagan chiding him for the costs. "Many of us feel that it could be done for one-third that," he told me. "Ten million! I run an AM-FM station with sixty-five people and it doesn't cost $3 million." The planned operation, he pointed out, also won't need a sales or promotional staff, which usually makes up the bulk of a commercial station's payroll.

Predictably, Miami's Cuban community is ecstatic over Radio Marti, with a wide array of self-appointed leaders jockeying for appointment to its projected eleven-member board or to the directorship of the station itself. According to Miami exile sources, a leading candidate for the board is Jorge Mas Canosa, who organized Cuban community support for Republican Senator Paula Hawkins of Florida in last year's campaign.

In an interview, Hawkins described Mas, a wealthy Miami construction company owner, as a "great patriot" who is "held in high esteem." Expecting to be consulted on appointments to the Radio Marti board, on September 25 Hawkins wrote the White House a letter recommending Mas. She recounted his underground activities against Castro as a student—activities for which he served time—and his participation in the invasion force at the Bay of Pigs. Later, Mas became a radio broadcaster with the CIA-operated Radio Swan and, she said,"a leading representative of the Cuban exile community in the U.S."

But both federal and Miami intelligence sources were disturbed to learn that Mas had been an important financier of militant anti-Castro groups, including the Cuban Nationalist Movement, members of which are said to form the core of the Omega 7 terrorist group and some of whom were convicted in the Orlando Letelier slaying. Both FBI and Dade County investigators described Mas as "an old friend" of Dr. Orlando Bosch, imprisoned in Venezu-

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ela for the mid-air bombing of a packed Cuban airliner in 1976. Such allegations were branded ludicrous by Mas and other informed Miami sources, who pointed out that Mas had long been friends of terrorist victims in Miami. "I challenge anyone to prove otherwise," Mas told me. "In public life, you always have enemies."

IN WASHINGTON'S CURRENT political atmosphere, the prospects are mixed for getting Radio Marti on the air by January as planned. There is favor for anti-Castro policies in principle, but in practice Congress may be reluctant to fork over $10 million when the White House has been singing an austerity anthem for social programs. In the end, it's likely Congress will express its approval but fund the project at levels far below White House proposals—or not at all. As an aide to liberal Representative Michael Barnes (D-Md.) told me: "Well, the congressman's not opposed to it *in principle*."

But the most unlikely kind of projects can suddenly take wing in Ronald Reagan's Washington. Just when anti-Castro paramilitary organizations had withered from an absence of federal financial support and when investigations of the Orlando Letelier murder and Omega 7 bombings had reached their not altogether satisfactory conclusions, the Reagan White House promises a resuscitation of exile hallucinations about retaking Cuba. Such fantasies have unfortunately resulted in disrupting life in America as much as in Fidel Castro's Cuba. Rabidly anti-Castro federal law enforcement agents responsible for keeping an eye on violent elements in the exile community in the United States are shaking their heads over Reagan's encouragement to them. "Nobody dislikes Castro more than I do," an FBI source said in typical cant, "but this is just going to keep all those nuts real hot in Miami."

Richard Allen's announcement of Radio Marti was made after consultation with and encouragement from Roger Fontaine, National Security Council staff member in charge of Latin American Affairs, and Thomas Enders, the State Department's chief of Latin American policy, plus officials from the International Communications Agency (the former U.S. Information Agency). Thus, the project has unified administration backing and serves as a public manifestation of Alexander Haig's repeated vow to "go to the source" of turmoil in Latin America—in his mind, Cuba. At the very least, it appears to be a counter-move to Fidel Castro's announced intention of beaming a 500,000-watt superstation into the United States on the AM dial. U.S. and Cuban negotiators have quietly been trying to work out a "compromise" that would have Castro use a less disruptive FM band, but little progress has been made, according to industry sources. Reagan's intention to put Radio Marti on the air, said Bill Viands, "gives us a card" to play at the annual meeting of the North American Radio Broadcasters Association in Rio de Janeiro in January. Cuba withdrew from the association last year but will send unofficial delegates, according to Viands.

The newsletter of the conservative Institute of American Relations in Washington, meanwhile, has reported that the Radio Marti plans have encountered opposition from "Florida broadcasters, who are fearful that any Castro jamming of Radio Free Cuba broadcasts will also jam Florida radio and television signals." The newsletter said "high Pentagon officials" might consider placing transmitters "in friendly nations near Cuba, or on ships." Efforts to site the transmitters outside the United States, of course, immediately internationalize an already wasteful war of words. One result of putting a radio tower down in, say, Jamaica, would be to provide a handy target for anti-American bombs.

One might argue that Ronald Reagan should be able to have the same radio show Fidel Castro wants. But, putting politics aside for a moment, one may also wonder what $10 million worth of radio propaganda will buy in Cuba. Certainly Cuba's citizens know what's right or wrong with their situation without being told by Radio Marti—witness the Mariel stampede. In any event, shrill anti-Castro propaganda emanating from the United States is not likely to have much swaying power. The Voice of America has pumped its stuff into Cuba for twenty years with little effect. American rock 'n' roll and designer jeans are more likely to lure young Cubans from a Spartan life than American ideology or news of Fidel's pratfalls. As a tousle-haired Cuban teenager wearing a Donna Summer T-shirt yelled to me in a Havana park one warm night: "Take me to Miami!"

"Why?" I asked him, stupidly thinking of the Liberty City riots, high prices, and unemployment.

"Dee-sco!" he laughed. "I want dee-sco!"

MEDIA

PAUL KRASSNER

A meeting of small minds

*A REPORTER AT THE AMERI-*can Writers Congress pointed out to me a passage from the new memoir by CBS correspondent Harry Reasoner, *Before the Colors Fade:*

The world doesn't have many real villains, very many real bad guys, if you define a villain as a person who *thinks* of himself as a villain. I've only been aware of two figures in the news during my career with whom I would not have shaken hands if called to deal with them professionally. I suppose that what Thomas Jefferson called a decent respect for the opinion of mankind requires me to identify those two. They were Senator Joseph McCarthy and a man named Paul Krassner or something like that who published a magazine called *The Realist* in the 1960's. I guess everyone knows who McCarthy was. Krassner and his *Realist* were part of a '60's fad—publications attacking the values of the establishment—which produced some very good papers and some very bad ones. Krassner not only attacked establishment values; he attacked decency in general, notably with an alleged "lost chapter" from William Manchester's book, *The Death of a President*. To paraphrase critic Clive Barnes' remarks about a movie: *The Realist* was the kind of paper that gives dirty papers a bad name. My grounds for despising them were that, based on their speech and actions, they had to *know* they were villains, but I suspect that even those two, who seemed execrable to me, thought of themselves in a much better light.

Thus was the schizophrenic tone of the writers congress set for me. It has been nearly fifteen years since I published "the parts left out of the Kennedy book," a tale of presidential necrophilia in which Lyndon Johnson changed President Kennedy's entry wound into an exit wound in a unique—some would say tasteless—fashion. As a not-exactly

PAUL KRASSNER is a social reprobate. His latest attack on all that is good and decent is Tales of Tongue Fu.

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household name satirist I find it weirdly flattering, but mostly just weird, to be compared to a mighty, professional character assassin like McCarthy.

But the right to freedom of expression existed eons before the First Amendment was ever conceived, and I applaud Reasoner's Zen-like approach to it—what is the sound of one hand shaking?—as opposed to the approach of the U.S. Labor Party, which has published a dossier that falsely accuses me of making threats against its presidential candidate, Lyndon LaRouche, and prints my address and phone number.

So there was a certain extra dimension for me when the writers congress opened at the Roosevelt Hotel in New York City with a phone call from former CIA operative Philip Agee, whose passport has been revoked because he has been busy revealing the addresses and phone numbers of CIA operatives around the globe. (A few days later, at the publication party for his latest book, *White Paper? Whitewash!*—on the CIA in El Salvador—Agee was scheduled to be present on videotape, but the tape was busted by the ever vigilant customs people. During his transatlantic phone call, Agee suggested that a CIA operative be revealed over the signatures of 2000 writers at the congress. Alas, this *Spartacus* notion did not go beyond the fantasy stage. Two other CIA dropouts were there in person: Victor Marchetti, who contended that Agee is still CIA and making it difficult for *real* defectors, then admitted that alcohol has become his solace; and Frank Snepp, who, consequently, expressed his gratitude that he had defected at a younger age than Marchetti and remains unbroken.

These ex-spooks must have confirmed the worst fears of Midge Decter, first lady of the neo-right and executive director of the Committee for the Free World. Said she in a prepared statement:

> We take it as no accident that this gathering of writers, called by The Nation Institute, bears the name of The American Writers Congress. Like its namesake in the 1930s and '40s, the Congress of 1981 purports to provide a discussion of literary and cultural issues but is in fact a wholly political enterprise. It is, in other words, a front . . . a vehicle for the expression of the hatred of the radical Left for America.

The object of Decter's wrath resembled a gigantic left-wing literary cocktail party more than a covert commie cell meeting. Leaflets, magazines, books, and snacks were carried around in white shopping bags advising, "If you're worried about the country, try *The Nation*." The Grand Ballroom resembled an arena filled with liberal bag ladies trying to weave their way through the overflow crowd and spot a recognizable face or a familiar by-line on somebody's lapel card, while huge blue balloons, inflated with a combination of helium and hot air, rubbed restlessly against the ceiling.

Who's a writer? Anyone who can string five words together—as long as he or she is oppressed.

Decter's villains ranged from Studs Terkel, who lamented the impending retraction of the Freedom of Information Act—there are thirty-five such bills of retraction—to Kurt Vonnegut, who shouted, "Give me knowledge or give me death!" The Intelligence Identities Protection Act, one of the bills they were protesting, would outlaw disclosure of the Watergate conspirators' CIA connections.

IRONICALLY, NO ONE ASKED panelist Sidney Zion why he blew Daniel Ellsberg's Pentagon Papers cover back in 1971—or, for that matter, why Zion has forsaken the reporting profession and is now running a Times Square bar instead. "Editorial censorship," he complains, "is the daily blood of American journalism." Zion, a lawyer who had worked for the *New York Times*, once wrote a series on organized crime. But the paper wouldn't allow him to attribute a quote to a Mafia spokesman because it didn't seem dignified for the *Times* to have such a source. While the writers congress was in progress, a nun was raped; the *Times* would later report that the rapist had fled New York because he heard that the Mafia, in all its Christian compassion, had issued a $25,000 contract on his life. Apparently rapists are okay sources.

Editorial censorship is an extremely unfavorable working condition for writers, but Zion was cynical: "They only go on the picket line for goddamn money." A delegate claimed that "American writers are the worst paid of all writers in the world. We are literally a colonized people," albeit one with an image problem brought on by those rich guys you see on television talk shows. Still, as a class, one speaker reminded us, writers make less money than coal miners. And of course, coal miners don't suffer from the dreaded black finger disease caused by changing typewriter ribbons. Nor do you see Sissy Spacek in films like *Hack Writer's Daughter*.

Reading between the whines at the writers congress, one could find a recurring question: Who should actually be *considered* a writer? Ought Jessica Mitford be included in the same spectrum as the anonymous creator of a T-shirt slogan that boasts, *I Survived the 1981 Baseball Strike*? Perhaps the prevalent definition was that anyone who can string five words together is a writer, as long as he or she is oppressed. Hence young Cherríe Moraga stood up at one panel and said she was intimidated by all the literary prizes the various panelists had won. Then Moraga pointed out that she was both a chicana *and* a lesbian, and that intimidated everyone else. Instant credentials.

Mitford was among a few hundred American writers who were asked to be listed as the inviting committee of the congress. Mitford lent her name but not her presence. alta, a Berkeley poet, went a step further and withdrew her own lower-case name as an inviter. She had originally said yes, she wrote in a letter,

> because I respect *The Nation* and assumed that our politics were in alignment.
>
> To learn that one of the earliest grants received was from *Playboy* was a real shock. The reason so many of us women left the left was because of sexism, and here we are again. 1981: no E.R.A.; and *The Nation* accepting grants from *Playboy* to underwrite, of all things, a panel on the First Amendment. . . .
>
> Pornography is an insult to women; and *Playboy* has insulted us for a generation. We are so used to it now that most people I've talked to about this say, o, well, it could be worse. At least they aren't accepting a grant from *Hustler*. How do they know? Does *The Nation* delineate between good pornographers and bad ones? Or are we all to make money off the blood of women who are killed by men who do not comprehend us as human beings?

FERRETING OUT SUBVERSIVE sponsors required an ability to make fine distinctions. alta, for instance, didn't mind taking the Mobil Foundation's money; it was just *Playboy* she objected to. Her feminist colleague Robin Morgan was willing to go along

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with both of those, but dropped off the pornography panel when she discovered it included, of all things, a representative of the ACLU. The ACLU defends freedom of speech for Nazis and pornographers—and, of course, feminists.

Not all the feminists did their talking by not showing up. Among the original *Statement of Principles* of the congress was this: "The urgent necessities for democratic change to eliminate inequalities of race, class, gender and sexual orientation demand that we be prepared to fight for those aspects of social life that give us access as citizens and room to function as writers." To which retired bomb-planter Jane Alpert responded with a successful push for a vote adding on, "This includes the rights of women all over the world to make free choices about their reproductive lives." Presumably the next reproductive rights conference would pass a resolution guaranteeing the freedom of pregnant writers to freely choose between carbon paper and copy machines. Plus one to guarantee the right of Catholic writers to moonlight at condom factories carefully pricking tiny pinholes in the merchandise to give the sperm a fighting chance.

At a panel on pornography, there was this mimeographed little quiz from Women Against Pornography:

1. Do anti-porn feminists hate sex? *Answer:* No. Aryeh Neier [former national director of the ACLU] hates women.
2. Do they want to burn books? *Answer*: No. The ACLU wants to silence feminists.
3. Are they sleeping with the Moral Majority? *Answer*: No. *The Nation* is in bed with *Playboy*, for a fee of $12,500.

The panelists were no less virulent. Leah Fritz announced that "it is time to do away with the red herring of the First Amendment"; another spoke deprecatingly of "First Amendment junkies." Andrea Dworkin proclaimed that "the penis in pornography is the penis in rape." A woman in the audience objected to this verbal extension because she personally was "*attracted* to the penis." There was a quick answer for that: It is "the imperialistic penis which supports the government of El Salvador." This was not the first time that military might has been equated with the penis. A decade ago, when Senator Charles Goodell came out against the war in Vietnam, Spiro Agnew—the human eggplant who became vice president—called him the "Christine Jorgensen of the Republican party." (Indeed, if you scramble the letters of Spiro Agnew's name, it comes out to "grow a penis," but that's probably a coincidence.)

The Moral Majority was represented by Executive Director Michael Farris on a panel on book censorship. Farris said such censorship is proper because children soak up whatever values adults expose them to. As if to underscore his point, the young son of retired pie-thrower Aron Kay called out, "You filthy pig!" Kay, frothing at the hand, was barely dissuaded from pieing Cord Meyer—associate deputy director of the CIA's clandestine operations from 1951 to 1977—who was on a panel about the use of national security as a vehicle for censorship. (Meyer should know; his wife, a former mistress of President Kennedy, was murdered some years back in what most investigators think was a rather extreme case of censorship in the name of national security.) Kay's wife is pregnant—perhaps with twins—in which case, she said, "We'll name them Lemon and Meringue."

'It is time to do away with the red herring of the First Amendment,' announced Leah Fritz.

This bifurcated rhetoric seemed to affect everyone. At a panel on working-class writing, Avery Corman, author of *Kramer Versus Kramer*, said that there is no working class, they're all middle class now; Pietro di Donato, author of *Christ in Concrete*, said that the middle class are fascist bastards who voted for Ronald Reagan; Tillie Olson, author of *Silences*, was silenced by the moderator's gavel when she tried to take too long to say that there *is* a working class and she writes for it.

ABBIE HOFFMAN WAS SUPposed to be on a censorship panel at the writers congress, which described him as "possibly the most-published American fugitive." However, Hoffman was present by the controlled grace of a state work release program whose bureaucracy asked him not to speak and make any public waves. Instead, he anguished privately over a literary establishment that, embarrassed by the Jack Abbott murder, chooses to snipe at Norman Mailer rather than expose the horror of the American prison system, a subject much closer to Hoffman's heart these days. Hoffman had watched "Saturday Night Live" with Mailer, and they both found it hard to laugh at a sketch about writers in prison who spend visiting days haggling with their agents. (In deference to Abbie, the congress later passed a courageous resolution on imprisoned writers, declaring "its opposition to any and all attempts to imprison, detain, harass, abduct, ban, or murder any person for his or her expression or belief.")

There was much talk of a union, and 1500 individuals at the writers congress even signed a petition calling for a formation of a writers' union. Muttered Alice Turner, fiction editor of *Playboy*, "All the unions in the world can't force anybody to read something they don't want to read."

At the plenary session on the third day, after a resolution endorsing the principle of a National Writers Union was passed, a small minority sang "Solidarity Forever."

Five hours and a dozen resolutions later, the ranks severely thinned out by other priorities, a most controversial resolution squeezed through advocating military aid for liberation struggles against the South African apartheid regime, plus a boycott of all writers, entertainers, media people, sports figures, and artists who travel to South Africa. Opposing arguments about escalating bloodshed and condoning censorship—at a writers congress!— did not sway the hard-core black caucus and its white supporters. Neither did the fact that many of the writers weren't certain whether SWAPO was a swingers' club or the missing Marx brother deter them from voting for the resolution. A Continuation Committee was empowered to decide on a score of remaining resolutions, against book burning and in support of the Socialist Workers Party, against the arms race and in support of the air traffic controllers' strike.

Finally the congress adjourned. I left with Deanne Stillman and Rex Weiner, coauthors of *Woodstock Census*. Out of compulsive nostalgia, we attended a private screening of "The Hippie Temptation," an old CBS documentary starring Harry Reasoner, whose prejudicial narration has been transformed by time into hysterical camp. Then it was time for me to start attacking decency in general once again. ❏

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Running from the
REFUGEE POLICE

Alberto, Elena, and Maria escaped a nightmare of gunfire and blood in El Salvador. When they came here, we harassed them, jailed them, and tried to send them back to die.

BY LARRY ESTRIDGE

ALBERTO WAS SCARED ALL THE TIME. HE lived across the street from the barracks of Chalatenango in the interior highlands of El Salvador, near the Honduran border. Every day he saw members of the local death squad go out. They usually wouldn't return until they had killed several people and left the bodies in different parts of the city. They came and went by their own entrance. It was barred to the rest of the regiment. And they always wore civilian clothes and big hats with oversized brims, or kerchiefs over their faces. Alberto laughed a tight nervous laugh. "They looked absurd," he says. But Alberto kept such thoughts to himself. . . . "You only had to say the wrong thing. ORDEN members were all over the place. They were the ears for the death squad. They were paid 600 colones a month by the government and had life insurance." (ORDEN is a paramilitary group that was supposedly disbanded in 1979.)

Alberto is 18 years old. He is thin and has Indian features and raven hair. Just a few months ago he fled from El Salvador, where the majority of his friends are now guerrillas. A week before he left, his cousin was killed. The cousin was out walking with his girlfriend two hours before curfew when three men approached them. They told the girl to go and then they took the cousin away. She ran to tell his parents and together they went searching. They found him a few blocks away, shot in the head. He was killed, Alberto thinks, because he was a university student.

Today, Alberto is living in Queens with his brother-in-law. He is still afraid. He is one of 40,000 Salvadoreans in the New York area who escaped the terror in El Salvador and came to the United States seeking refuge, only to be subjected to the terror of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). More of them come every day. There may be half a million in this country now, but, according to INS, only 36,619 Salvadoreans are here legally. The remainder are illegal aliens, subject to arrest, detention, and deportation.

The Salvadoreans see themselves as refugees and exiles. If they learn of their rights and can find representation, they file for political asylum. They are fleeing a country in the midst of a civil war in which murder and mutilation are common tactics. All of them have lost friends, families, or neighbors. Church groups, human rights advocates, and even some members of Congress view the deportation of Salvadoreans with alarm. As long ago as April of last year twenty-four members of Congress wrote Warren Christopher, then acting secretary of state:

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It is reported by Amnesty International that the massive killings of people in El Salvador are of genocidal proportions. Therefore, it would be unwise and inhumane for the United States government to deport human beings into a country where they are likely to be subjected to unconscionable human rights violations.

As you know, the State Department . . . has granted extended voluntary departure and work authorization to Ethiopian, Nicaraguan, and Iranian Nationals in the past, when there was civil unrest in those countries. Clearly, the situation in El Salvador is comparable, and the Salvadorean Nationals in this country merit the same type of treatment.

Since then the bloodshed has only increased. More than 30,000 Salvadoreans have been killed in the past twenty-two months.

The State Department view is that the Salvadoreans are coming here for economic, rather than political, reasons. Although lobbying efforts on their behalf have continued, and Representative Ted Weiss (R-N.Y.) recently introduced a sense-of-Congress resolution supporting them, the State Department stands firm. It will not grant extended voluntary departure—a temporary reprieve that allows refugees to stay here until civil disorder in their own country subsides—and it is rejecting almost all the asylum applications it reviews. Of the first group of 1,200 advisory opinions issued by the State Department on Salvadorean asylum applications, 1,188 were negative. (That's the most common story, anyway; State Department officials are notorious for shrugging and saying they aren't sure.) And the processing continues. In 1980, INS apprehended 11,792 Salvadoreans here. Most were sent back to El Salvador at our expense, on planes that leave every day from different U.S. cities. The trip costs taxpayers $300 a head. It often costs the Salvadoreans their lives. Some of them are even killed by "security forces" as they leave the airport in El Salvador.

To get to the United States, the Salvadoreans travel by bus, train, and boat, through Guatemala and Mexico. Then they usually cross the U.S. border with the aid of a "coyote," one who arranges crossings for a price. They continue to Los Angeles; some of them stay in the large Salvadorean exile community there, while others take planes to New York, San Francisco, or Washington. In August 1980, eleven Salvadoreans died in the Arizona desert making such an entry into the United States. But the people are desperate to get here. Many sell everything they have *and* borrow to make the trip possible. It costs them between $1000 and $2000 apiece—a lot of money in a land where the average wage is less than a dollar a day, and one-third of the people are unemployed.

Most of the Salvadoreans clustered in the large exile communities are poor, though some have left very good jobs to come here. Now they work in factories, restaurants, and the garment industry, or have small businesses. They may even be working in the kitchen of your favorite restaurant, or in a fifty-cents-an-hour garment factory in the loft next door. Along with other undocumented workers, Salvadoreans work under the worst conditions, for the least pay, at the least desirable jobs. Like other illegal aliens, they earn minimum wage or less, have no benefits or job security, and have no way of airing grievances. Several Salvadoreans I interviewed spoke of having accidents on the job and of being told that if they left work to seek medical assistance, they would be fired. One INS investigator told me, "They're subjected to every kind of harassment you can imagine."

The specter of "illegal aliens" taking jobs away from citizens and glutting social services is often raised, but there is scant evidence to support it. In a 1980 report on immigration policies, the California Advisory Committee on Civil Rights says that, for the most part, undocumented workers are doing jobs that nobody else will do. The report also says that they pay far more in taxes than they take back in social services. Numerous other studies say the same thing.

According to Ralph Raimond, supervisory criminal investigator for INS in New York City, there are between 800,000 and 1 million undocumented people in New York. He has only forty-four investigators to go around picking those aliens up. But pick them up they do. Every day, Salvadoreans and other undocumented workers are being snatched by INS investigators—from their jobs, their homes, the street, the airport. INS cannot possibly eliminate the "illegal alien problem." It can guarantee that a class of noncitizens lives in fear. By holding the threat of denunciation and discovery over the undocumented, it keeps them in line. Salvadoreans are particularly afraid of discovery. Deportation to El Salvador may result in grave personal harm. The loss of their jobs here may mean that their families in El Salvador will starve. A bust is a disaster.

Someone had informed on Elena Delgado y Flores, and she became the INS team's next "hit." "She's eight months pregnant," said her boss when we arrived. "Be very gentle with the way you handle her."

INS INVESTIGATORS DO NOT LIKE COMPANY. One official said, "I, myself, have been torn apart in the press. I'm the most mild mannered, boring guy you could meet, and I was made into an animal." After three weeks of being put off, I was finally put together with an INS team in New York City. Pete O'Callaghan seemed a jovial, Art Carney type, with a fishing hat pitched forward on his head. The other investigator, whom I'll call Carol, barked that I couldn't mention anything about her and did little to hide her displeasure at my presence. It was her show, so out we went—not to a factory raid in Queens, as I had been led to believe, but to an office two blocks from Federal Plaza.

Someone had informed on Elena Delgado y Flores. (Like the names of all the other refugees in this story, hers has been changed to protect her.) A report stamped "confidential" gave her description, the place where she worked, and when and where she entered the country illegally. The information was accurate enough. She was to become the next "hit."

"Is there any way out?" Carol asked Pete as we entered the office of the lock company. Pete staked out the escape routes as we were conducted to the manager's office through a room where eighteen women were working. The manager said that Elena was there and as far as he knew she had a green card. He called in an assistant and told her to bring Elena to the lunch room down the hall without disrupting the office. "She's eight months pregnant," he added. "Be very gentle with the way you handle her."

When the assistant called Elena from her desk, she seemed to know immediately what was happening. She burst into sobs.

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In the lunch room, Carol quietly asked Elena in Spanish a variety of questions and elicited information about when, where, and how she entered the country. She said enough to give INS grounds for deportation.

"She is a very essential worker here," interjected her boss. "What can be done to keep her here?" Carol explained that if she had a "highly trained skill" the company could seek labor certification for her, which he said would take six months. In the meantime, she couldn't work.

"I fight like a tiger with INS," says the refugee service director. "People tell me 'we do not come for economic reasons. We come to save our lives....' I helped a man whose daughter's arm was cut off by the security forces."

Elena couldn't stop crying. "At least now it's happened," Carol told her. "It's better than looking over your shoulder waiting for immigration to come."

At the investigations unit in the Federal Building, Carol went through Elena's pocketbook and then presented her with a form in Spanish called *advice of rights*, which she was asked to sign. It said that she was aware of her right to remain silent and have a lawyer. Elena said she wanted a lawyer and didn't want to sign anything.

INS has forms for all occasions, and although Carol was slightly annoyed, she just pulled out another one and began asking questions about Elena's history, her family, her address, and what possessions she had in her apartment. Elena didn't want to give her address. "If you don't give me your address," Carol threatened, "we have to put you in jail."

After more—and less gentle—persuasion, Elena signed an affidavit describing the circumstances of her stay in the United States and her personal history, which she had to stand and swear to. She also signed a card with her fingerprints and was photographed. After she agreed to appear in a month for a hearing, she was free to go.

Elena sat for a while to collect herself. She was distraught. Her $133 a week take-home pay was all there was to maintain herself and her two children in El Salvador. She usually sent them $200 a month. She was hoping to bring them here to get them out of danger; and the new baby was due any day. Officials said it was unlikely she would be sent back for months because of the baby, but as far as she was concerned, all of her plans were dashed with the flash of a badge.

Elena's pain was typical. The response of her employer, and the raid and processing I had witnessed, were not. Her boss not only expressed concern for Elena, but the next day got a lawyer for her upcoming hearing. Most employers say good riddance and take the opportunity to pocket whatever is due their former employees. And usually when INS investigators raid a business or factory, unless whoever is in charge threatens suit, they check the papers of anyone they think might be "illegal." Those who can't prove their status are taken in.

Salvadoreans who are apprehended are typically presented with a form called a "voluntary departure." The form states that a person acknowledges being an illegal alien and that "pursuant to my request," INS "has granted me the privilege of departing voluntarily. . . . I will be allowed to return to El Salvador the country of my choice." Thus the signer waives his rights in this country and saves INS the trouble of formal deportation proceedings. Many refugees tell stories of extreme coercion by INS investigators to get them to sign the "voluntary departure," and many sign. For some it will turn out to be their death warrant. Eighty percent of the Salvadoreans returned by INS to El Salvador go "voluntarily." Those who refuse to sign will languish in an INS jail until their deportation hearing, unless someone pays their bail. For Salvadoreans, initial bail has been running from $3000 to $5000. In New York and California lawyers can sometimes get this reduced to $2000 or $1500, but most Salvadorean refugees have no money to pay even that.

The enormous legal problems of the Salvadorean refugees have been attended to most actively by the Migration and Refugee Service of the U.S. Catholic Conference and by other Catholic immigration projects. Lydia Savoyka, director of the refugee service in New York, is a fiery, virulently anticommunist Ukranian woman. She has become an ardent champion of the Salvadoreans.

"I will not let them take my people," she says, waving a stack of affidavits. "I fight like a tiger with INS. You must help me to get *extended* voluntary departure before I go crazy." Ten boxes full of files labeled *Salvadorean* line the radiator and floor of her office. It was she who developed what one lefty immigration lawyer termed "a brilliant strategy." She started compiling asylum applications for Salvadoreans who had not been apprehended as well as for those who had been caught. When word got out, a flood of refugees swept through her office.

"The people tell me 'we do not come for economic reasons. We come to save our lives, and we think this country is responsible to help us because of its policy in El Salvador.' I helped a man whose daughter's arm was cut off by the security forces."

She now has between 7000 and 8000 asylum applications in various stages of completion. All of the immigration lawyers in the country have put together little more than 3000. The lawyers take greater care with each one, but it doesn't seem to make a difference—they're nearly all rejected anyway. Nevertheless, the review, hearing, and appeal process takes time. Time may save lives.

MARIA MARTINEZ IS A VIVACIOUS FIVE feet tall with dark curly hair. She is another Salvadorean who was picked up the same day as Elena. A week later I visited her in the INS jail.

Maria was working her first day as a cashier in a cafeteria on Madison Avenue when INS picked her up. At first the investigator was "very cordial," she said. He presented her with the "voluntary departure" and explained it fully. His mood changed when she refused to sign.

"He gave me another paper, also in English," she recalls. "It was my history, how I came here, all kinds of things. He never told me I had the right to remain silent. If he had done that I wouldn't have said anything.

"Everything I told him was true except. . . . He insisted that I came with my whole family. I said no and he got annoyed and began yelling at me that I was a liar. He said I had to sign this form. He said it was only a declaration concerning facts about myself, but there were many other things on it. I asked him if the form was in Spanish, but he said no. I can read a little English and slowly I read through it. It also said that I

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would give up my rights and accept deportation." Maria refused to sign. The investigator was furious.

"He got really mad. He grabbed my arm and pulled me into a small room to take my fingerprints. I remained calm and he just got more annoyed. He was angry that I wasn't crying. He said that obviously I was a delinquent, that I was accustomed to this. I was dying of fear, but I knew if I let on he would only oppress me more, and once I broke down, he would force me to sign.

"He showed me another form with all kinds of words, also in English. He said, 'If you sign this you will go free, you won't have to pay bail, and you will be able to stay here as a political asylee.' But I didn't believe him. I could hear the lies in his voice. It was so ugly.

"Then he showed me another form. He said if I wanted a smaller bail, I would have to sign it. I wouldn't sign. Then he took me back to the large room. He wanted me to sign the card with my fingerprints. He was saying, 'Sign. Sign.' I said my fingerprints are my best identification. He got so mad, he nearly ripped the card up. He said if I didn't sign, I would have to spend two months in jail before I would be able to see a judge.

"He took me to the holding cell. He said if I signed the paper I would be free. I said I would rather stay in jail a year. He left me in the cell for half an hour and then brought me out and put a paper in front of me. I wouldn't sign so he put me back in the cell. After another hour he brought me out again. He showed me another form. 'Do you want to go free? Do you want a lower bail? Sign.' He was shouting. All the other employees were looking on. When I said no again, they all started laughing. I thought he would have an attack.

"Then they brought me here. I feel like an assassin or a thief. I'm ashamed to go back to my house."

Maria is 25 years old. She has two children in San Salvador where she worked as a secretary. Her husband is a merchant, her father a professor of literature and the owner of a small business. She said that she never had anything to do with politics, but that it was very bad in her country for everybody. She left El Salvador last Christmas, but still speaks of her leaving only with great difficulty.

"He said, 'If you sign this you will go free, you won't have to pay bail, and you will be able to stay here as a political asylee.' But I didn't believe him. I could hear the lies in his voice. It was so ugly."

One day she left her office in San Salvador while a gun battle was going on nearby. The bus couldn't pass and she couldn't find a taxi. She decided to walk home. Near a tunnel that passes under the runway of Antigua Airport, she was accosted by six national guardsmen. They dragged her into the airport offices, beat her, raped her repeatedly, and threatened to kill her.

"I was very sick after this. My nerves were shot. For ten days I was incapacitated," Maria recalls. "I went to a psychiatrist who was a man and a psychologist who was a woman. They helped a little, but I couldn't go back to work. Every day I would have to pass by the airport and it was impossible for me. I gave up my job and decided to come to the United States.

"My case is not unique. A mountain of women have suffered these things in my country. It happens every day."

THE INS JAIL WHERE MARIA SPENT NINE days is called a "processing facility." It is located across the street from the Brooklyn Naval Yard and used to be the navy brig until it was sold to INS in 1975 for $1. It was overpriced. The physical plant is decrepit, the smell of disinfectant oppressive, and where there is paint on the walls, it is one of a variety of nauseous shades of green. Clearance granted, one must pass three check points and go through a minimum of four sets of locked gates to gain access to the men's dormitories. Television cameras monitor every room. Even the vending machines are in cages.

The facility's population generally varies from 70 to 120 men and 5 to 25 women, but it is sometimes higher. When I was there recently, there were 13 Salvadoreans in a total population of 87. According to Kevin Doyle, deputy assistant director for detention, the average stay is 6.11 days for men and 5.46 days for women. But many Salvadoreans have spent over a month in the jail. One man I met had been there for over a year.

Detainees are extremely bitter about the fact and circumstances of their confinement. Most detainees have never been in jail before and they don't know why they are there or why, if they must be detained, they are treated with so little respect. They are charged with a civil, rather than a criminal, violation, but as one Central American said, "If I committed murder I would have more rights than I have here."

"These people are not criminals, and they are not accused of having violated any criminal laws," said Steve Shapiro, an attorney with the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU). "They generally have been treated as if they had no rights whatsoever. The facility is really an example of a lawless institution."

A cursory reading of *Federal Standards for Prisons and Jails*, published by the Department of Justice, shows the facility to be substandard in more than fifteen areas. Detainees have many complaints, but the most common have to do with the severe crowding; the arbitrary solitary confinement and physical abuse; and the lack of activities, privacy, space for personal belongings, library or legal materials, outdoor exercise, grievance procedures, and contact visits. Many said they discouraged visits by their families, who were searched and subjected to indignities when they came. The meals also receive universally poor reviews. The detainees say that something called "yodo"—which makes them dizzy—is put in the food.

"They have people who go crazy. Do they give them help? No, they put them in solitary," one Salvadorean said, pointing to a Dominican who had recently been released from "maximum security." He came over to where we were talking. The Dominican was very anxious to expound on his experience in solitary with God and the devil. The devil had taken him over, see, but he was a very good teacher and . . .

For the past year and a half, INS has been fighting a federal lawsuit filed by NYCLU. Shapiro told me they've reached a settlement designed to give the detainees some safeguards and upgrade the facility, forestalling—at least temporarily—an NYCLU move to close the jail. "I think the settlement will make one small part of a generally rotten picture a little better," he said of INS.

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Aren't Salvadorean refugees protected by international and U.S. law? I asked the immigration judge, but he said he didn't know. His final words as he headed for the courtroom were, "I better leave that up to policy."

The INS jail is a school for anti-American ambassadors. The people I encountered there came to this country with great hopes. These hopes have been soured—to say the very least—by their experience. They wait to be deported. They wait for hearings before a judge, or for someone to post their bail. They wait for someone to come to their aid.

SISTER KATHRYN WALSH, KNOWN AS SISTER Peggy, is one of those who has taken an active interest in the Salvadoreans. She learned the INS ropes from Lydia Savoyka and now she works with the Immigration Project of the Southside Community Mission in Brooklyn. Several mornings a week, she visits the INS jail, which she calls "the university." She informs Salvadoreans of their rights, encourages them to file for political asylum, represents them at hearings, and tries to arrange bail reductions. In some cases, she actually pays the bond from money collected at her church—the Church of the Transfiguration. When people get out, she tries to obtain labor certification for them and find them a place to live. Since January she has handled the cases of more than 100 Salvadoreans.

Weekdays, starting at 1 P.M., detainees in institutional jumpsuits of different colors file into Judge John Speer's courtroom in the INS jail. Before Judge Speer takes the podium, the room is usually packed by detainees and their representatives. Sister Peggy is often there.

She said that Judge Speer is not an insensitive man: "It means so much that he really tries to treat the people as human beings." A defense attorney, who asked not to be named, agreed that Judge Speer "is not out for blood, but some of the other judges are real animals. They scream at the people and scare them half to death."

Defense attorneys say that the immigration judges are not impartial and that often they take the role of prosecutor when the INS trial attorney—the prosecutor—is insufficiently agressive. Phil Boneta, an attorney with Brooklyn Legal Services, said "hearings often become a shouting contest between the judge and myself and the client is trembling in the middle. I have never known an immigration judge who has ever been a defense attorney." Immigration judges typically work their way up from being INS prosecutors, as did Judge Speer. They are employees of INS, and although Speer acknowledges that this relationship is questionable, he maintained that he acts with independent judgment, "presumably like any other judge."

Court was about to convene when Judge Speer learned a reporter and photographer were in the house. He called us into his chambers and said that pictures could not be taken in the courtroom. When we asked if we could take *his* picture, the judge was flattered; he insisted on donning his robe (which none of the attorneys present had seen him wear before) for his portrait, while a courtroom full of people waited an extra ten minutes for hearings that were already an hour and a half late. I'm glad that he took the time. It gave me the opportunity to ask him a question that's been bothering me since I started looking into the Salvadorean refugee story.

Are not Salvadorean refugees covered by international law and U.S. code? They are recognized as refugees in Honduras and in Costa Rica, under the protection of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees. Canada has granted them its equivalent of extended voluntary departure. Why aren't they entitled to the same consideration here? They are fleeing a war zone and not one of them lacks a "well-founded fear of persecution," which is the basis for protection under the Refugee Act of 1980.

First Judge Speer said he didn't know. Then, musing aloud, he said, "Let me see what in all decency I can say." His final words as he headed for the courtroom were, "I better leave that up to policy."

If it's a question of *law*, what does *policy* have to do with it? Some immigration judge somewhere should figure it out, regardless of policy, before another Salvadorean who came here seeking refuge is sent back to be killed.

For months, Judge Speer has presided over bond reduction hearings for Salvadoreans, routinely chopping $1000 off their bail like a commodity broker. Now that the State Department has made recommendations on Salvadorean asylum applications, he will have to begin ruling on individual cases. Judge Speer has the chance to be a hero. He can decide to go against policy. He has the power to grant Salvadoreans extended stays or to approve their asylum requests. He can decide that taking responsibility for standing up to the State Department and INS is preferable to taking responsibility for sending people to a place where their safety is in jeopardy.

Every Salvadorean has a story to tell, but in the end their tales begin to blend together, a long, surreal narrative of blood, gunfire, and explosions. It's the same story with different details: teachers decapitated and their heads tied to fences, houses dynamited, bodies dumped on strategic street corners. Many of the refugees consider themselves apolitical, but what is happening in El Salvador is beyond politics. The refugees scoff at the American government's claim that the leftist guerrillas are a small band of Cuban dupes, and they weep at American support of the junta. As long as it continues, the killing will go on. One reason the government is so anxious to hustle Salvadorean refugees out of the country is that they don't want them talking like this. And that's another reason we should fight to keep them here. What the refugees tell us could save us—and them—a great deal of pain and lives and money.

Hispanics are now the biggest minority group in the United States. The people here from El Salvador and other Central American and Caribbean countries will not remain quiet and invisible forever. Already there is an active anti-intervention movement among Salvadoreans who have been here for some time and do not have the same immigration problems as the refugees. The movement is reaching out into the Salvadorean and other Hispanic communities, and as the war goes on, it will grow. We will have to answer to these people.

Victor, one of the Salvadoreans in the INS jail, refers to President Reagan as Reagan *Pilatus*. When I didn't understand him at first, he said, "You know, Pilatus, the one who washed his hands of the blood of Christ." For Victor and others from El Salvador, President Reagan's preoccupation with "international terrorism" seems cruel. ❏

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THE ROAD FROM HERE, by Paul Tsongas. Alfred A. Knopf, 280 pp., $12.95.

The liberals' new clothes

STEPHEN CHAPMAN

AMONG THE MANY UNPLEASant results of the 1980 Republican landslide is the appearance of a creature called the "new liberal." The best thing to be said for the new liberalism is that it makes one yearn mightily for the old version. For all their errors, the old New Deal liberals occasionally served up a potent brew, capable of inspiring fury if nothing else. To judge from this book, the new ones offer nothing better than weak tea. One could no more get excited about what they have to say than one could feel lust for Betty Crocker.

That may be the idea. Paul Tsongas, the junior Democratic senator from Massachusetts, presents *The Road from Here* as a rethinking of liberal ideology, an attempt "to define a direction for the future." Tsongas refers to his philosophy as "compassionate realism." He told the *Washington Post*, "There's a real vacuum out there, and I intend to fill it as much as I can." But his book amounts to nothing more than a liberal politician's guide to survival in the Age of Reagan. As one new liberal, Jerry Brown, put it, it's like guiding a canoe. You paddle a little on the right, then a little on the left.

Of course, the new liberalism didn't begin in November 1980. Several practitioners had been identified by the press even before that debacle, including such Democratic senators as Gary Hart of Colorado, Joseph Biden of Delaware, and Tsongas himself. Interest in the new liberals didn't really perk up, however, until so many of their more orthodox brethren were flattened by the Reagan bulldozer.

Tsongas apparently sees himself as a left-wing counterpart of Jack Kemp, trying to reinvigorate a clapped-out party with fresh ideas. Like Kemp, he is believed to have ambitions beyond Capitol Hill. He argues that Democrats have failed to appreciate the private sector, ignored the importance of economic growth, and refused to offer their own plans for strengthening the military—abandoning these issues to the opposition, with calamitous results. But Tsongas insists that Republicans have also overlooked issues that will become increasingly important, including environmental damage, depletion of energy resources, and aid to the Third World. His recurring theme is that the world has changed, but neither liberal nor conservative ideology has evolved to fit the new realities.

Well, it's true that liberals and conservatives have been muttering the same platitudes for at least half a century, but in fact they never made much sense. Franklin Roosevelt is Tsongas's hero because he "responded to the realities of his time and discarded previous ideology. He created a philosophy of political action that accomplished many things—and above all, it worked. Its working was central to the philosophy, not vice versa." Was it? Consider that in 1938, after five years of FDR, the national unemployment rate still stood at 19 percent—compared to 23.6 percent the year before he took office. That Roosevelt stuck to his futile Keynesian prescriptions suggests that he didn't care if they worked or not, just as long as he got reelected. Tsongas no doubt shares that preference.

Any attempt to neatly summarize Tsongas's philosophy is bound to imply a coherence that it doesn't have. On economic matters, for instance, Tsongas often sounds like *Business Week*, endlessly reminding the reader of the vital importance of encouraging investment, promoting exports, and preserving jobs. Although he makes much of his appre-

BRUCE MCGILLIVRAY

STEPHEN CHAPMAN is on the editorial board of the Chicago Tribune.

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ciation for the role of the market, Tsongas never hesitates to overrule it when it doesn't do what he wants, as in the case of the Chrysler bailout.

Though he points out the hypocrisy of conservative senators who supported the package of loan guarantees, in the end Tsongas supported it too. He regards his handling of the Chrysler issue as a model of how liberals should alter their approaches, but his sole contribution was to propose a wage freeze as part of the bailout. His rationale for going along even after his amendment lost? "It made no sense to allow Chrysler to collapse and incur all the economic and social costs of that bankruptcy if its future product line would give it a reasonable possibility of economic survival." If Chrysler had had a reasonable chance of making it, it would have been able to borrow money in the private markets. Unfortunately, those people who make their living judging such questions decided that anyone who lent money to Chrysler probably wouldn't get it back (unless, of course, Washington stepped in).

AFTER A FEW DOZEN PAGES on the need for tax incentives for capital formation, the senator shucks his wingtips and slips into sandals to preach about Spaceship Earth. Here the little economics Tsongas has picked up goes out the window. His chapter on energy opens with the unqualified assertion, "Oil is a finite, diminishing resource." This fact he regards as the first and last word on energy, the implication being that we must practice strenuous conservation and channel huge subsidies to "renewable" energy sources. In fact, given the vast stores of conventional oil yet to be extracted from the earth's surface, the additional reserves available from tar sands, coal, and shale, and the prospect of new forms of synthetic oil, the world will probably never run out of oil.

But even if we were rapidly exhausting our supplies, government-enforced conservation wouldn't be necessary or wise. The market itself would reflect the progressive depletion with higher prices, thus promoting the development of other forms of energy (while, incidentally, reducing consumption). If available oil were growing more scarce rather than less, its real price would not have declined steadily over the last century. According to Tsongas, one study demonstrated that "world oil production would not and could not keep pace with world demand, and we were heading toward a serious crisis." This prediction should be taken no more seriously than the U.S. Geological Survey's 1891 claim that Texas had no oil. In any case, one wonders how Tsongas missed hearing about the current world oil glut.

Tsongas swallows every other doomsday cliché as well. There is the population bomb. "In time, faced with the horrors of too many people struggling over too few resources, the only available solution will be for the strongest to obliterate the weak. . . . Should world population be stabilized, we will then be able to concentrate on an improved standard of living for all inhabitants. . . ." Somehow it has escaped Tsongas's attention that the most rapid population growth in world history has accompanied the most dramatic rise in living standards. Starvation, he says, will be rampant, when in fact all empirical evidence indicates that malnutrition and famine affect fewer people today than ever before, even in the poorest countries. Farm land is being relentlessly paved over, he claims, even though the amount of cultivated land on the globe has been increasing every year. (For more on these and other such matters, see Julian Simon's excellent new book, *The Ultimate Resource*, from Princeton.)

Tsongas discreetly ignores U.S. intervention in Central America.

On defense issues, where one might expect a "new liberal" to have something interesting to say, Tsongas is a disappointment. Granted, he does display some common sense about the Soviet specter, as when he notes that much of the Soviet Union's military spending is aimed at the perceived threat from China: "Imagine 1 billion Mexicans, with nuclear weapons, claiming the southern half of California, all of Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, hating America and allied with Russia. It would make Americans very jumpy if not paranoid." But his approach to the U.S. military budget consists of measuring the gap between the Reagan administration's demands and those of other congressional liberals, and then splitting the difference. Though critical of the administration's vow to increase real military spending by 7 percent per year, Tsongas himself favors increases of from 3 to 5 percent per year. Most of his suggestions involve nothing more than spending defense dollars more efficiently—on the stealth bomber instead of the B-1, on more small aircraft carriers and fewer big ones, on tanks instead of the MX missile.

Now some of these suggestions make perfect sense, given the premises of the debate. But what about the premises themselves, which Tsongas never examines? The United States wouldn't need a $200 billion defense budget were it not for its endless string of military commitments encompassing nearly the entire globe. Aside from arguing that we should side with democratic elements instead of reactionary ones, he doesn't dispute these commitments. Nowhere, for example, does Tsongas question the policy of the U.S. government (implicit under Carter and explicit under Reagan) to protect our access to the Persian Gulf against any threat, external or internal, even if it means nuclear war. He discreetly ignores the issue of U.S. intervention in Central America. And he claims briskly that "America is not expansionist today, and we seek no dominance, only stability."

If this is the best example of what is being offered by the new generation of Democrats, then there's not much reason for hope. For all his talk about new ideas, Tsongas generally sounds no different from your average liberal Republican. For all his harping on principle, he has proved just as eager as any politician to use government money to buy public support. His biggest project so far shows what all that cooperation he wants between government and business is likely to mean. When the Boston Bruins hockey team threatened to move to New Hampshire, Tsongas spearheaded an effort to get the legislature to provide the club with a new arena—at a cost to the taxpayers of $57 million. This is "compassionate realism"?

The "new liberalism" isn't all that new. In fact Jimmy Carter might be seen as the original new liberal. He managed to get elected President largely because he was able to pretend that a fiscal conservative could find cheaper ways to pay for all the Great Society programs at home and all the military outposts abroad—which is essentially what Tsongas believes. Carter failed, thus demonstrating the intellectual emptiness of that approach. Perhaps more important to someone like Tson-

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gas, Carter wasn't able to make his magic formula politically popular, either. All he succeeded in doing was alienating the constituencies of the federal government's innumerable social welfare programs without attracting the support of their critics, and creating anxiety among foreign-policy hawks without satisfying doves. Tsongas's new liberalism suffers from exactly the same flaws. It would not reverse the economic decay of the 1970s, nor reduce the growing risk of war. Carter showed how well the new liberalism works when it comes to running the country or attracting electoral support. Nothing in Tsongas's book suggests that his revised version would work any better. ❏

***RABBIT IS RICH*, by John Updike. Alfred A. Knopf, 467 pp., $13.95.**

Exquisite plenitude

ROBERT TOWERS

THE DOCUMENTARY IMpulse has persisted strongly in the Western world since the latter decades of the eighteenth century, when reformers, inspectors, and travelers began to record, in thick detail and for various purposes, the phenomena of their own times. The street life of Paris, the poor of London, the domestic economy of the Laplanders—whether native or foreign in its focus, this documentary concern has figured largely in the development of the social sciences and, since Balzac at least, in the fluctuating popularity of the realistic novel. Sometimes the documentation has been superficial, designed to give a sheathing of verisimilitude to melodrama (Balzac) or to pseudoscientific demonstrations (Zola, Frank Norris); at other times it has served the purposes of satire, social protest, and even comedy. In a few notable instances, the documentary mission has become almost an end in itself—so central to the novelist's aim that character and plot seem to exist primarily as vehicles to display the manners, morals, and (above all) the material objects most representative of the author's era.

In recent decades in America the rage to record has burned most passionately, perhaps, in two novelists who grew up—a long generation apart—within a few miles of each other in eastern Pennsylvania. The late John O'Hara was extremely proud of his role as a social historian and insisted rather belligerently upon his ability to make fine discriminations concerning the social status of cars, neckties, clubs, and lovers. But of course in a novelist the documentary impulse is never pure. For all his show of ruthless objectivity, O'Hara's observations were in thrall to his private, tormented fantasies of rejection by his social betters—fantasies which his actual success (and acceptance) did little to allay. John Updike's impulse strikes me as sweeter, less self-serving. He is a recording angel, not a malcontent or snob. His voice is more celebratory than discriminatory, and as such it comes close to lyricism—even when, as in his latest novel, the recorded facts might seem hardly an occasion for song.

Rabbit Is Rich is, of course, the third of the Rabbit Angstrom novels, each separated by a decade; a fourth is promised ten years from now. Less personal in its drive than *Rabbit, Run* (with its portrait of a failed young man blindly bolting towards an illusory freedom), less stridently public than *Rabbit Redux* (so late-sixtyish in its preoccupation with angry blacks, hippies, and Vietnam), *Rabbit Is Rich*, set in 1979, is a rather mellow book, more quizzical than outraged in its depiction of a society far gone into chaos.

Harry (Rabbit) Angstrom, once a high school basketball star, later an overweight cuckold and dupe, still lives in the middle-sized, declining city of Brewer (Reading), Pennsylvania. But now, at 48, he is prosperous, having been placed in charge of the Toyota agency founded by his late father-in-law. He is bemused, amazed even, by the amount of money streaming in—and going out. Their fires tamed but not quenched by middle age, Harry and his wife Janice live with Janice's mother, old Bessie Springer—an arrangement that has lasted since the burning of the Angstroms's former house near the end of *Rabbit Redux*. They have joined a country club, the Flying Eagle, not by any means the most exclusive in the area but a place that caters to the new "class of the young middle-aged that had arisen in the retail businesses and service industries and software end of the new technology and that did not expect liveried barmen and secluded cardrooms, that did not mind the pre-fab clubhouse and sweep-it-yourself tennis courts of the Flying Eagle; to them the polyester wall-to-wall carpeting of the locker rooms seemed a luxury, and a Coke machine in a cement corridor a friendly sight."

There the Angstroms spend time with their new pals, the Ronnie Harrisons, the Webb Murketts, and Buddy Inglefinger and his girlfriends. Janice drinks more than she should, but she has kept her looks, along with a certain sexual

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CHRIS HANSEN

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confidence dating from her affair in *Rabbit Redux*, and maintains with Harry a weathered but serviceable marriage. She would like to make love more often than he proposes, for Harry's desire for Janice has been largely replaced by a sense of duty reluctantly acted upon; it seems to him "a melancholy falling that an act so glorious has been dwindled to this blurred burrowing of two old bodies, one drowsy and one drunk." (In one very funny scene Harry tries to read *Consumer Reports* in bed while Janice creates a "commotion" below his waist.) His sexual fantasies, however, occupy many pages of the novel—fantasies that center increasingly upon the lovely Cindy Murkett, whose bikinied body Harry ogles by the poolside of the Flying Eagle. Everything is fairly cozy, except that the world is going to pot.

The chief disrupter of Harry's own comfort is his son Nelson, a Kent State dropout who returns to the parental nest with a girl-pal, Melanie, and is soon revealed to be in flight from still another girl, Pru, whom he has made pregnant. Pru arrives and Melanie leaves. Relations between Harry and his resentful crybaby of a son could hardly be worse, and they do not improve as the novel goes on. Nelson, who has reluctantly agreed to marry Pru, demands a place in the Springer Agency and enlists the help of his mother and grandmother (who has inherited a half-interest in the dealership) to bring pressure on the reluctant Harry. Harry has to agree, even though the hiring of his supposedly incompetent son means the firing of his associate dealer, Charlie Stavros (who was once Janice's lover). Nelson wrecks cars, treats Pru badly after their marriage, and runs away before the birth of his daughter. In short, he is a shaving off the paternal block and, as such, intolerable to his father.

THIS UNRESOLVED OEDIPAL conflict moves the novel along, at a fairly relaxed pace, and provides many links to its predecessors, in which poor Nelson is presented, first as a small child and then as a prepubescent boy, in a far more amiable light. There are subplots too: Harry's need to find out whether an 18-year-old girl who comes into the agency with a boyfriend could possibly be his own daughter (by Ruth—remember?—from *Rabbit, Run*), and his intensifying preoccupation with Cindy Murkett—can something come of it? But these elements of plot serve mainly as a framework upon which Updike can mount his intricately assembled and lovingly detailed account of what it is like to be a member (white) of the new, mobile, and post-industrial middle class in Jimmy Carter's America.

Double-digit inflation, inner-city decay and the beginnings of gentrification, the soaring crime rate, the fecklessness of the young, speculation in gold and silver, the energy crisis, national humiliation at the hands of the Ayatollah—all these flicker through Harry's consciousness as he jogs, not runs, through the novel, his responses conditioned by the slogans that bombard him from newspapers, television talk shows, and poolside conversations. Above all, he is aware of the Sexual Revolution: the porno-mags openly displayed, the strip joints and X-rated movies, the Polaroid snapshots (not intended for the kids) that he finds in a bedside table drawer at the Murketts's. Harry even becomes a participant, frolicking naked with Janice in a golden shower of Krugerrand coins in which he has invested, joining in the fun when, toward the novel's end, an evening of mate swapping with his country-club pals takes place at a Caribbean resort—an evening that concludes for Harry and his partner (not Cindy, alas!) in golden showers of another sort. It's enough to make the ghost of George F. Babbitt (of whom Harry, sixty years later, is a reincarnation of sorts) pop its eyes and say, "Golly!"

Rabbit Is Rich is a novel of splendidly constructed scenes—set pieces, really—that are at once funny and melancholy, faintly menacing and absurd. I particularly enjoyed the episode in which Harry and Janice, loaded down with seventy-four pounds of silver dollars (for which Harry has traded in his Krugerrands) make their way from the coin dealer's through a threatening downtown neighborhood to the safety of the bank, where "Christmas carols are pealing within the great vaulted interior." The wedding of Nelson and Pru is another small miracle of empathetically imagined and narrated action that incorporates a disparate collection of characters (old Bessie Springer and her fellow biddies, the homosexual minister and organist and usher, the Murketts, and, of course, the unhappy bride and groom) into a breathing, moving whole. Updike's awareness of the human comedy is here given wonderful scope. And though the expected metaphoric excesses do occur and sometimes repel, the verbal touch through most of the novel seems delicate and sure. Not for the first time Updike strikes me as more truly a poet in his prose fiction than in his published verse.

I do not, however, think that he excels as a creator of memorable major characters. (The minor characters are considerably more successful.) In each of the *Rabbit* books, the image of Rabbit Angstrom himself is so diffused as it passes through the screen of Updike's sensibility that it becomes a shimmering mass, lacking contours. The same is true of Janice. Each is meticulously observed, there are no false notes in what they say or do, but in neither is there

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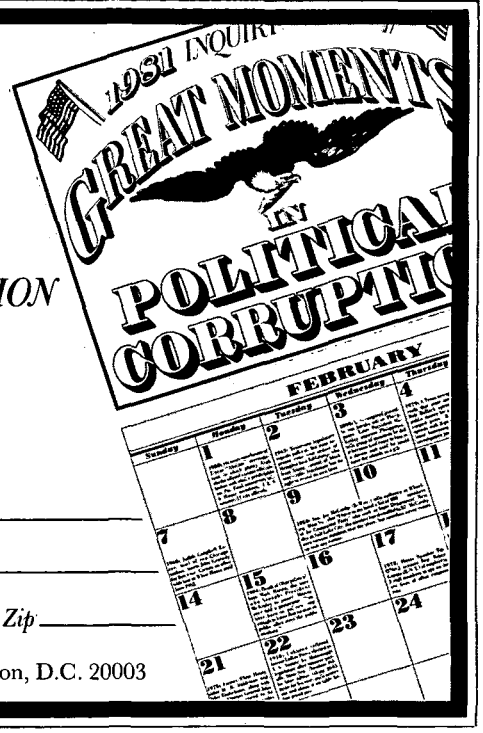

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such a palpable center of personality as to make one inclined to say of an acquaintance, "Oh, he's a regular Rabbit Angstrom type. . . . " Though Rabbit is obviously conceived as very different from his creator, Updike's focus on him is so myopically close that the very differences which are most interesting become blurred. Nor do I think, as some critics seem to do, that Updike is saying something profound about the quality of our lives or about the hidden operation of divine grace through the recalcitrant clay of human confusions and desires. Never mind. The exquisite rendering is more than enough. We can enjoy the plenitude that Updike provides without demanding greatness as well.

THE TEN THOUSAND DAY WAR: Vietnam, 1945–1975, by Michael Maclear. St. Martin's Press, 368 pp., $16.95.

VIETNAM, A History in Documents, edited by Gareth Porter. Meridian Books, 496 pp., $8.95.

Timely reminders

WILLIAM SHAWCROSS

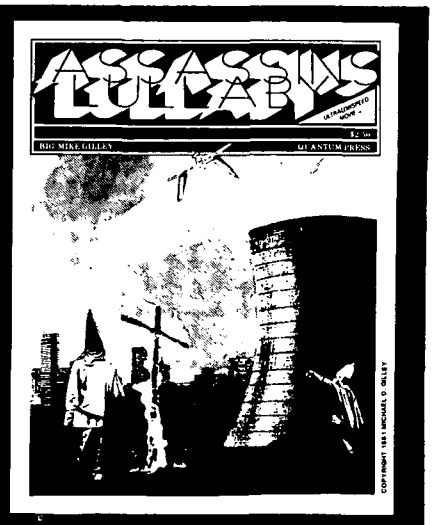
*VIETNAM TODAY IS A SHAM*bles. For its continued occupation of Cambodia it is being "bled" by China, which is supported (more or less) by the United States, Europe, Japan, and southeast Asia. The bleeding is having an effect. Vietnam is one of the poorest countries in the world—in per capita income, according to the World Bank, it ranks somewhere between India and Bangladesh. Official rations are now down to thirteen kilos of rice a month, two kilos less than the minimum recommended by the World Health Organization. Among the poorest people are government officials, and a third of the sick and malnourished children in one Saigon clinic are children of government workers. A visitor to Vietnam today cannot fail to notice the way in which cynicism and corruption (albeit sometimes of a mild kind) are beginning to infect government and even party officials. The official radio and press are filled with minatory stories about crime and despondency.

Many thousands of people—no one knows how many—are still in the euphemistically named "reeducation" camps in which at least 200,000 people have been confined without trial since 1975. By no means all of these people were officials of the former Thieu regime. The system has been condemned by Amnesty International, which was allowed to visit Vietnam, but although considerable batches of prisoners have recently been released, the system still exists. It is a symbol of the lack of reconciliation between north and south six years after the direct American effort collapsed in 1975.

Vietnam has 200,000 troops in Cambodia and has regularly denounced all international attempts—like that by a UN conference in July—to permit an international settlement of the issue. As a result, China, Thailand, and the West have rebuilt the repulsive Khmer Rouge into a force of some 40,000 men, well armed and well fed, who are increasingly tying down the Vietnamese troops. Their renewed strength gives some justification to the continued Vietnamese presence, for although the occupation of Cambodia is illegal, it was for the Cambodians a liberation from a tyranny unprecedented in recent history. Life today in Cambodia is far better for most people than it is in Vietnam. Given the shortages at home, Vietnamese troops in Cambodia have exhibited remarkable self-discipline in not carrying off the aid that the West has poured into Cambodia while denying it to Vietnam itself. There is no end to this dismal deadlock; for the people of Indochina the war did not end in 1975—it took different forms.

These two books deal with the earlier phases of the war, those in which the United States had more direct involvement. Both books are valuable. Michael Maclear, the author of *The Ten Thousand Day War*, is a Canadian television journalist. His book was written along with a television series on the war. A good deal of work, particularly on interviews, was contributed by Peter Arnett, the legendary and excellent Associated Press reporter who worked for years and years in Vietnam. Gareth Porter's *Vietnam, A History in Documents* is a condensed version of a two-volume book he has already published. As he points out, any such slim volume must be highly selective, and the selection is a task of individual interpretation. Porter brings

WILLIAM SHAWCROSS is a contributing editor of INQUIRY and the author of Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon and the Destruction of Cambodia.



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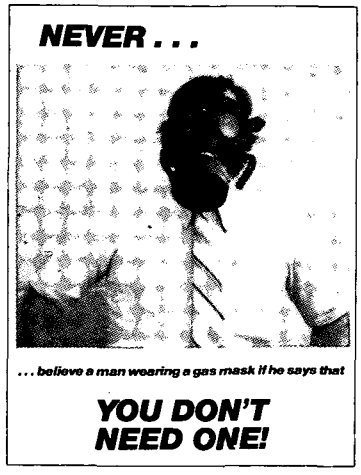

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to this task a record of dedicated support for the communist cause in Indochina. During the war he worked for the Indochina Resource Center, an antiwar lobbying group in Washington; and in 1976 he published a book, *Cambodia—Starvation and Revolution*, that defended the Khmer Rouge against the horror stories then seeping out of Cambodia.

One merit of both books is that while they do not pretend to be comprehensive, they will be useful both for those who seek an introduction to the war and also for those who think they need no introduction. Maclear's attempt to compress the complex thirty-year history into a readable narrative of just over 300 pages is audacious. But it succeeds; his book is gripping, moving, dispassionate, unpedantic, and informative. It includes a number of interesting interviews with many of the war's directors, particularly on the southern and American side. (Both books suffer from a dearth of materials from the Hanoi archives, as do all books about Indochina.) Those interviewed include Thieu, Colby, Ky, Westmoreland, and Graham Martin, the last U.S. Ambassador to Saigon. Sometimes, perhaps, Maclear gives undue weight to those who talked to him or Arnett, simply because they did do so. Thus John Ehrlichman is quoted at length, though he is not the ideal man to describe what Nixon and Kissinger were actually doing. But perhaps no one else could have been much more informative—for even if Nixon and Kissinger themselves knew what they were doing, they kept it pretty quiet.

Those who were most right about Vietnam have been least honored—and vice versa.

BOTH BOOKS ARE WEAKEST on the Nixon-Kissinger period. As Porter points out, few documents are available because Nixon and Kissinger succeeded so well in centralizing and concealing policy making in the White House; few of their papers have been released. The most detailed account of their machinations will probably be found in the biography of Kissinger that Seymour Hersh has almost completed and of which Kissinger is said, rightly I imagine, to be terrified. Nixon's own memoirs are shallow, though they are actually more honest than Kissinger's. The second volume of Kissinger's massive—and massively misleading—work has just been completed by Harold Evans, the editor of the London *Times*. Kissinger is about as good a writer as he is a statesman, and so Evans, with a devotion to the Kissinger cause inexplicable in a man who made his reputation as a fearless, crusading journalist, has undertaken the task for him, along with another gifted *Times* wordsmith, Oscar Turnill. Their joint effort will be out next spring.

The early chapters of Maclear's book are more detailed and graphic than those covering the Nixon years. He describes well the way in which U.S. policy altered so tragically after the death of Roosevelt, favoring the French return to Indochina. Porter's book, too, contains many of the crucial cables and memos of that period. They are sad to read.

Thus Roosevelt's 1944 memo to his secretary of state, Cordell Hull: "The case of Indochina is perfectly clear. France has milked it for one hundred years. The people of Indochina are entitled to something better than that." There are several reports from the Office of Strategic Services mission that established warm links to Ho Chi Minh, "our friend of the forest, Mr. C. M. Hoo."

Maclear includes a splendid account of the battle of Dienbienphu and—borrowing, I imagine, on Arnett's vast granary of memories—he has written a fine description of the buildup of American forces and the insane life that American GIs lived in Vietnam. He manages to combine the madness on the ground with the madness in Washington itself—a happy marriage of the impressions so well conveyed in Michael Herr's *Dispatches* with a sober factual account of who was saying what to whom, when, where, and why. For the final stages he gives a rather sympathetic rendering of the plight of Graham Martin. Maclear says, to my surprise, that of all the ambassadors there, Martin was the best qualified—because "he was the only one to have studied jungle warfare techniques in years of liaising between the State Department and Pentagon and concluded that America did not understand this kind of war." Nor did Martin. And does anyone now?

Porter concludes his preface to the documents by saying that "as the conflict recedes into the past what ought to emerge more clearly in the American consciousness about it is what a needless war it was." Yet that has not happened. In part because of the horrors in Indochina since 1975—particularly in Cambodia—the *needlessness* has not become clearer. "The mistakes of the 1960s had hardly been addressed by the 1980s," Maclear notes at the end of his book. "The architects of war had mostly retired or returned to law and business, some to write books of apology or conflicting analysis, others disdaining any explanation except for very large fees. The few who returned to power retained the old beliefs. . . . Alexander Haig now rationalizes that 'the overrunning of Cambodia by Vietnam confirms the heavy hand that Moscow has always had in the conduct of Hanoi's policy. . . .' He concludes that 'the war was eminently winnable.'"

Such statements are absurd, even nauseating. The war was never winnable, and Maclear's book makes that quite clear. But the resurgence of the idea is troubling, to say the least. As Maclear points out, those who were most right about the war have been least honored. Those who were most wrong, like Kissinger, have been most feted. Notes Maclear: "In Eugene McCarthy's blank verse, 'Henry Kissinger got the Nobel Prize for watching the end of the war he'd advocated—and that's pretty high diplomacy.'"

By coincidence Gloria Emerson ends her introduction to Porter's book in the same way that Maclear ends his book: with a reference to the boys from Bardstown, Kentucky, who died. For Emerson it was the father of one boy who once asked the question that endures: "If we had done it, if we had won, what would we have?" In contrast, Maclear quotes a veteran: "I love this country and my country asked me to go. And that's the reason I went. And willingly. And I may have to do it again someplace else. Who knows?"

In the meantime, in Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos, war and suffering continue. The principal responsibility now lies with Hanoi; its own intransigence together with the way in which the rest of the world has reacted have combined to insure that war will not go away. ❑

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WOODROW WILSON: A Medical and Psychological Biography, by Edwin A. Weinstein. Princeton University Press, 399 pp., $18.50.

The sick Woodrow

WALTER KARP

WHEN SIGMUND FREUD and William Bullitt's "psychological study" of Woodrow Wilson was posthumously published in 1967, it ran into near-universal hostility, mostly focused on the authors' use of psychoanalytic concepts. In fact, the "Freudian" portion of Freud's and Bullitt's work was the least important thing about it. The book's real significance lay in the authors' powerful portrayal of Woodrow Wilson's dark and singular political character. They rightly saw him as a man so vainglorious and self-regarding that he could treat America itself as a mere steppingstone to personal greatness. They showed him to be so immersed in "a world of words" that his "alienation from reality," in their words, often bordered on lunacy.

Freud and Bullitt did not stop there. Understanding Wilson's colossal vanity and the political temptations that went with it, understanding his bottomless capacity for self-deception and the perilous license it gave him, the two men, writing in the 1930s, were able to pierce one of the most tenacious fictions in modern American history—the pious doctrine, endlessly reiterated, that Woodrow Wilson strove in vain "to keep us out of war." The grand and terrible truth, Freud and Bullitt realized, was exactly the opposite. Determined to dominate a postwar peace conference and bring "permanent peace" to the world, Wilson did all in his power to embroil America in the carnage of the European War. American historians have often noted the "burden of guilt" (to quote Edwin A. Weinstein, the author under review here) which sapped Wilson's strength at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. What they have never been able to explain was why a President who was ostensibly forced into war should have felt guilty about waging it.

Freud and Bullitt not only cleared up that mystery, they gave a tragic coherence to Wilson's whole ghastly enterprise. What was tearing America's President to shreds at the peace conference was the unbearable knowledge that tens of thousands of American boys had died in the trenches just so that he, Woodrow Wilson, could be present at that conference. He failed as mankind's would-be savior because he thought the peace and well-being of his own country a small price to pay for the chance to play the savior's role—"the noblest part that has ever come to a son of man," as Colonel Edward House, the President's serpentine tempter, put it to his friend two years before America entered the war. Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad.

Discredited by the general condemnation, the Freud-Bullitt book left no discernible mark on Wilsonian studies. Nevertheless it seems to have gotten under the skins of the official keepers of the Wilsonian flame, namely Arthur Link, author of a massive five-volume study of Wilson; the Woodrow Wilson Foundation; and the editors (including Link) of *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, now in its thirty-seventh volume. As a riposte to Freud and Bullitt they invited a neurologist named Edwin Weinstein to write a biographical supplement to *The Papers*. He was to use his medical and psychological understanding, not to illuminate Wilson's dark nature, but to palliate and explain away such portions of Wilson's public record as even the flame keepers find hard to defend.

Weinstein's method is simplicity itself. When dubious political motives completely explain some dubious Wilsonian deed, Weinstein conjures up a psychological or personal factor to diminish Wilson's responsibility. On the other hand, when the weird contortions of Wilson's psyche cry out for psychological exploration Weinstein invokes a medical excuse for his "patient." Consider, first, some examples in the "psychological" category.

For the partisans of Woodrow Wilson it has always been a source of embarrassment that their hero, who supposedly "hated war," began making warlike moves toward Mexico almost from the day he entered the White House. Weinstein now supplies a psychological alibi. In July 1914, when Wilson ordered U.S. Marines to invade Vera Cruz in a wanton act of unprovoked aggression, Mrs. Wilson had fallen fatally ill. "Wilson's distress over his wife's illness," Weinstein tells us, "may have been a factor in his bellicose actions which almost led to war between the United States and Mexico." Since Wilson began his bellicose diplomacy long before his wife fell ill, Weinstein's "factor" does not even qualify as a feeble excuse; it is nonsense.

It is also embarrassing to the Wilsonians that their high-minded hero, in pursuit of office, was even more of a liar and opportunist than your run-of-the-mill would-be assemblyman. During his campaign for the governorship of New Jersey, Wilson, who had been nominated by the old-line Democratic bosses, thought it prudent to proclaim that the Democratic party was now "regenerated, reorganized, purged and purified." When New Jersey's leading Progressive, George Record (whose support was essential to Wilson's election) asked Wilson to explain to the voters how a party could be purified when its corrupt leaders were still in place, Wilson denied

he had ever made the claim. "Psychologically, Wilson's original statement and later misrepresentations of what he said," notes Weinstein, "reveal the intensity of his emotional investment in purity." What about his emotional investment in winning the election?

MEDICALLY, WILSON'S life could supply any biographer so inclined with a superabundance of physical alibis. For one thing, Wilson inflicted upon himself an almost uninterrupted series of psychosomatic illnesses—headaches, dyspepsia, piles, grippes, influenzas, and mysterious "colds." Moreover, as Weinstein makes clear, Wilson suffered deeply and terribly from a progressive cerebral vascular disease involving the carotid artery. Beginning in 1896, when he

WALTER KARP is the author of The Politics of War, *recently issued in paperback by Harper & Row.*

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was forty, he suffered a number of strokes whose behavioral symptoms Weinstein invokes to explain whatever Wilson did within twelve months of their occurrence, except, of course, for praiseworthy deeds, which call for no explanation since they require no excuse.

As president of Princeton, for example, Wilson attempted to bull through a radical reorganization of the university, which he had dominated for years. Seriously opposed for the first time, Wilson revealed all too clearly the extraordinary extent of his arrogance, his willfulness, his blindness to fact and circumstance, and, most importantly,

In 1919, Clemenceau, who loved his country, beat down Wilson, who loved only himself.

what old Grover Cleveland, a Princeton trustee, rightly called his lack of "intellectual integrity." These traits, so characteristic of Wilson's White House years, Weinstein ascribes to the stroke he suffered in 1906. The stroke, according to Weinstein, had the curious effect of leading Wilson to ignore "obstacles" (people, facts) and to concentrate on "what he thought were the larger issues and ideals involved." In other words, what has often been described as "Wilsonian idealism" is merely a symptom of carotid artery impairment.

In similar fashion Weinstein provides a medical reason for Wilson's famously savage assault on "the little group of willful men" (led by the great Senator Robert La Follette) who filibustered a Wilson bill that would have given him unprecedented power to wage undeclared naval warfare against Germany. Since Wilson underwent a bout of headaches shortly after that assault, Weinstein suggests that "Wilson may have already fallen ill when he issued his intemperate and ill-conceived remarks" and so cannot be held fully responsible for them.

Least of all, insists Weinstein, can Wilson be held in any way responsible for his historic political collapse at the Paris Peace Conference, a collapse which blighted his hopes for "peace without victory" and thus for a League of Nations that would represent something more than a coalition of the victors in defense of their spoils. The collapse, which chiefly consisted of caving in to the vindictive peace terms demanded by Clemenceau, began suddenly on April 5, 1919. The events leading up to it are complicated but the reason for it is not. The fact is that Wilson desperately needed the League of Nations to justify his war and the Allies did not need it at all. With the league as his hostage, Clemenceau, who loved his country, slowly but surely beat to his knees an American President who loved only himself.

So much is obvious, but Weinstein will not have any part of it, although he is well aware of the "burden of guilt" crushing Wilson in Paris and of his "compulsion to vindicate himself." Weinstein was not invited by the flamekeepers to explore dark pathways but to provide face-saving alibis. According to Weinstein, the sole reason for Wilson's failure at Paris was that a few days before his surrender to Clemenceau, Wilson had fallen ill with the flu. This "viral illness" (which actually cheered the hypochondriac Wilson for the first time in weeks) acted upon the brain of a man suffering from carotid artery disease and, says Weinstein, induced as its symptom an irresistible impulse to surrender his principles. No such symptom has been established by medical science. Weinstein simply conjures up speculative medical explanations as he goes along. Indeed, the final symptom he provides for Wilson is exactly contrary to this one. According to Weinstein, the only reason Wilson refused to compromise an iota in order to secure Senate ratification of the Treaty of Versailles was that he had suffered a massive stroke in October 1919. This time cerebral vascular disease induced in its victim an adamantine refusal to modify his position for any reason whatever.

There is a grotesque irony running through Weinstein's entire book. Early in his account of Wilson's life, he takes note of Wilson's "tendency to give fictitious illnesses as an excuse for inadequacy." Moreover, the wealth of medical material Weinstein presents makes it clear that Wilson used illness all his life (including that cheering flu in Paris) as an alibi for failure, a haven from guilt, and a refuge from reality. Wilson's grand strategy for deluding himself, Weinstein has now adopted for deluding the rest of us. ❏

***EMINENT VICTORIAN WOMEN*, by Elizabeth Longford. Alfred A. Knopf, 256 pp., $22.50.**

Breaking away

MARINA WARNER

ELIZABETH LONGFORD'S Eminent Victorian Women belongs more to the tradition of exemplary, reverent literature about famous women than to the line represented by the famous book her title echoes, Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians*. Longford's brisk good humor and her spirited belief in the just rewards of endeavor couldn't be further from Strachey's withering hauteur and acerbic scoffing at his chosen subjects' undertakings. Longford has picked her heroines out of respect and with love, and she holds them up for her readers as models of triumph over circumstance.

She begins with a short, lively introduction outlining the horrendous legal position of women in England at the beginning of the nineteenth century, citing such notorious cases of injustice as Caroline Norton's. Norton lost her children, a legacy from her mother, and her own earnings as a writer to her husband when *he* sued her for divorce in 1836. "I have no rights. I have only wrongs," she wrote ringingly in the course of the campaign she waged for women's rights to family and property. In law, a woman was a "feme covert," "protected" by her husband. He gave her cover (the same word used for a mare when taken to stud), which was tantamount to bondage.

Accepting the need to see her subjects in relation to the menfolk in their lives, Longford is always interested in love, as a goad and as a shackle. But in her fair-minded view, husbands are not an impediment per se for ambitious or gifted Victorian women, nor a prerequisite. Her eleven subjects, she writes at the end, "might have been complete casualties of the nineteenth-century ethos, but miraculously were not. No century officially held out a more boring

MARINA WARNER's latest book is Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism.

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ideal for women than did the nineteenth. Woman was to be the masterpiece of a 'good man,' her husband, father, or brother. But these Victorian Pygmalions were too pompous and tyrannical for the idea to take root. The best of them backed out. With their support, women seized the marble and carved out the portrait themselves." But contingency was the female condition.

Apart from the hermaphroditic James Barry, the earliest of Longford's heroines is Harriet Beecher Stowe, who was born in 1811. Her youngest, Mary Kingsley, the explorer of West Africa, was born fifty years later. Annie Besant, socialist campaigner, lived the longest, dying in 1933 in India, after she had joined the Theosophical Society and fostered the young boy Krishnamurti as a divine prophet.

Longford's admiration is keenest when she writes about George Eliot's sagacious, broad, and burning mind, and in twenty pages she distills the essence of that voluminous novelist and her interesting, emotional life as George Lewes's unmarried wife. She locates the heart of Eliot's philosophy in an exchange from *Adam Bede*. When Adam is told that the preacher Dinah Morris is too good for love, being better than ordinary women, Adam answers, "But if she's better than they are in other things, I canna' think she'll fall short of 'em in loving."

Longford's other chapters on the very famous—on the Brontës, on Mrs. Stowe, on Florence Nightingale—lie more uneasily in the book, too close to biographical summaries composed for an encyclopedia. But with the lesser known, her animated, championing pen revives.

ELLEN TERRY, THE ACtress, is her favorite, for she was blessed with such guileless sweetness that she actually thought her partner, actor Henry Irving, was not aware of the full extent of his beauty. "Nell," a child actress of exquisite beauty herself, was first married to the dreamy painter G. F. Watts. He had kissed her, and she instantly thought she was going to have a baby, reported as much to her mother, and was hustled to the altar. But their marriage was most probably *blanc*, and she ran away, making the first of several "ardent exits" of her life. She then bore two children to the architect Edward Godwin. Godwin was unfaithful to her; she made another exit and went back to earning her living on the stage, becoming the most famous and beloved Shakespearean actress of the day, and the inspiration and love of George Bernard Shaw.

The most interesting, if less appealing, character here is Josephine Butler, a figure half forgotten today because her cause—the ending of state brothels—continues to suffer from Victorian prudishness in school histories. Mrs. Butler was the very stuff of a reformer, intrepid, passionately committed, and unflinching in subordinating personal interest—including the comfort of home and family—to the higher, public aim. In Liverpool, where George Butler was principal of Liverpool College, there were 9000 prostitutes in the 1860s; 2000 of those were minors under fifteen. In 1864, the

Ellen Terry

Contagious Diseases Act was passed, ordering state control of prostitutes through medical inspections. Mrs. Butler agitated with an archangelic force of mercy against this routine humiliation of women, railing that men were the perpetrators of the crime, and women their victims. After being subjected to censure—her husband had to resign from his post—and even to mob anger, she succeeded in getting the act repealed in 1886. Mrs. Butler struck a crucial blow for human dignity and libertarian principle. Paradoxically, she did so in the interest of deep puritanism, which led her to some rather doubtful activities on behalf of the purity crusade.

Longford does not deal critically enough with the spurious nature of the evidence that Mrs. Butler's right-hand man, the journalist W. H. Stead, presented in his sensational *Pall Mall Gazette* series on traffic in young girls. As Edward J. Bristow pointed out in his study *Vice and Vigilance*, Stead had some difficulty finding a real example of this white slave trade, and arranged that a 13-year-old girl be bought from her mother for the purposes of the article.

The last life in *Eminent Victorian Women* is also the most anomalous: that of Dr. James Barry, an army surgeon who lived out a full career as a man. Dr. Barry led a dramatic and highly readable life in the service of the British Empire. As medical inspector in the colony of South Africa, he/she performed the second successful Caesarian section ever, saving the lives of both mother and child. Dr. Barry also carried out West Indies hospital reforms that reflected Florence Nightingale's work in the Crimea. At his/her death, the layer-out announced that the body was a woman's, and thus corroborated the rumors that had continually dogged Dr. Barry in life.

Longford believes the rather circumstantial evidence that Dr. Barry was female. Physiologically, the evidence in fact points more to hermaphroditism, and though the story is fascinating, it isn't an eminent Victorian *woman*'s story. Socially, Dr. Barry chose the male gender, even adopting coarse speech, risqué humor, violence, and intolerance in an almost grotesque parody of masculine aggression. Longford reports that, in anger, Barry even slashed off a man's finger. Florence Nightingale, no softy either, commented when she was told Barry was a woman, "I should say she was the most hardened creature I ever met throughout the army."

A parallel to Dr. Barry's case was recently published by the French psychoanalyst Michel Foucault, in his edition of the memoirs of Herculine Barbin, a nineteenth-century hermaphrodite schoolteacher, who lived happily as a lesbian until a combination of church and state oppression forced her to change her identity to male and drove her out of the sheltering, enclosed world of girls' boarding schools. Barbin wrote a powerfully affecting diary before she committed suicide, at the age of 25, by gassing herself with the fumes of a charcoal stove. She died in February 1868, just three years after Dr. Barry's death. Foucault is scathing about the contemporary need to find sexual identity at one of the unambiguous poles of sexual difference and not accept the right of someone like Herculine Barbin to choose her own personality regardless of the arrangement of her genitals. By claiming Dr. Barry as female in order to add to the pantheon of female achievers, Longford subscribes to the reductionism

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Foucault condemns.

Dr. Barry never lived the predicament that the mother of Daniel Deronda, in George Eliot's novel, explained to her son: "You are not a woman. You may try but you can never imagine what it is to have a man's force of genius in you, and yet suffer the slavery of being a girl." Longford's Victorian heroines exemplify the many blazing tracks lit by women who continued to suffer that slavery. Even her least feminine personality of all, the explorer Mary Kingsley, gave up trying to explain to the Africans why she had no husband. Instead, she would fix her eyes on the way she wished to go and say, "I am looking for one." And the tribespeople, even as far away from Victorian London as the Cameroons, accepted that as a legitimate reason for her formidable pathfinding, and waved her on.

FROM BAUHAUS TO OUR HOUSE, by Tom Wolfe. Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 143 pp., $10.95.

The Bauhaus blitz

ALAN GOWANS

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT From Bauhaus to Our House is about, in a few short paragraphs, begin with Wolfe's third chapter, "The White Gods":

All at once, in 1937, the Silver Prince himself was here, in America. Walter Gropius; in person; in the flesh; and here to stay. . . . Other stars of the fabled Bauhaus arrived at about the same time: Breuer, Albers, Moholy-Nagy, Bayer, and Mies van der Rohe. . . .

The reception of Gropius and his confreres was like a certain stock scene from the jungle movies of that period. Bruce Cabot and Myrna Loy make a crash landing in the jungle. . . . They are surrounded by savages with bones through their noses—who immediately bow down and prostrate themselves and commence a strange moaning chant.

The White Gods!
Come from the skies at last!

Gropius was made head of the school of architecture at Harvard, and Breuer joined him there. . . . Mies was installed as dean of architecture at . . . Chicago. And not just dean; master builder also. He was given a campus to create, twenty-one buildings . . . in the middle of the Depression—for an architect who had completed only seventeen buildings in his career—

O white gods.
Such prostrations! Such acts of homage!

Although the point is not new—*Bauhaus to Our House*, another demonstration of Wolfe's mastery of the American language, is a case of "what oft was thought but ne'er so well expressed"—it's surely worth repeating, and still takes some courage to write, in academic circles at any rate. Yet overall, *Bauhaus to Our House* is disappointing. Wolfe is angry—too angry for the book's good.

Not that he overstates the case; in this instance, it's hardly possible to exaggerate. What power these Germans had in the American art and academic worlds! And how they used it! There are dozens, hundreds, more stories Wolfe might have incorporated. Any dotty old European who'd been near the Bauhaus, even a failed graduate, got genius treatment from American administrators, and woe to any miserable native who crossed him. Woe likewise to natives who chose to work in some field of North American art; it was assumed that they couldn't read German, because only in such trivial branches of learning were books written in English. As for the White Gods themselves. . . .

Around Harvard the story is still recalled of the time Kenneth J. Conant answered a summons to Gropius's office. He found himself confronted there by the new immigrant and a band of student disciples, who demanded explanations and apologies for some reference Conant had made in one of his classes to the possibility that "modern architecture might be sterile"—Conant, dean of architectural historians in the country, scion of an old American family! The shaken Conant wrote Gropius that it was "despicable" to use students as weapons in academic controversies and vowed he'd never shake Gropius's hand again. (Frank Lloyd Wright, according to Wolfe, wouldn't shake Gropius's hand either.)

Anyone who imagines "traditionalists" and "moderns" alternating innings in fruitful academic dialogue would be indulging in pleasant liberal fantasy. Gropius, Mies, Corbu, and company played by no such rules. When Gropius had his innings at the Bauhaus, he instituted a hiring policy of "Progressives Only! Bourgeois Need Not Apply!"—with who was progressive and what was bourgeois to be decided by him. That policy, and not the stuffiness of conservative burghers or the bogy of communism, was why Gropius was ousted in Germany, orthodox Modernist hagiography (which Wolfe, unfortunately, still repeats) notwithstanding. In his second innings, at Harvard, Gropius made sure—he tore down the grandstand, dismantled the playing field, called off the schedule, and sent the spectators home, there being no further contest for them to watch. But he kept their money. And that's what makes Wolfe so goddamned mad.

The Bauhausler (as he calls them) destroyed American art and architecture. Totally and forever—once the body of craftsmen who'd built America's architecture for six, ten, generations past had been wiped out because all the big commissions went to White Gods, there was no bringing them back. And the bastards made money out of it! Tons! Heaps!

It enrages Wolfe, too, to think how the Bauhaus reign goes on and on, in the biblical manner, unto the third and fourth generations. This he recounts in his concluding chapters, an analysis of the real nature of Post-Modernism—the book's most original contribution. What Venturi and Graves and their gurus Colin Rowe and Vincent Scully are really doing, according to Wolfe, is not rejecting Modernism at all but playing the Modern game of leapfrogging one place further in the great avant-garde March of Progress. Since 1910 or so it has been standard practice in the compounds (Wolfe's wonderful word for all those tiny cliques who issued manifestos declaring that they alone carried the sacred torch of Creativity, that they alone knew about Art and if you wanted any, you had to come to them on their terms) to upstage rivals with the cry "I'm more unbourgeois than you!" And this, according to Wolfe, is precisely what's behind all the smoke and spit of in-house journals quarreling over Venturi, Graves, Eisenmann, and friends. Modern architecture is thus repeating, with a decade or two lag, what Harold Rosenberg once called the "gigantic con game" that modern painting has degenerated into.

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YET RAGE, HOWEVER RIGHTEOUS, is not enough to make a good book. Some sober reflection on causes is what *Bauhaus to Our House* lacks. Okay, so the Great White Gods took over and the Little White Gods still reign—how could such a thing happen?

The Bauhausler, as Wolfe calls them, destroyed American art and architecture totally.

"Colonial mentality" begs the question. How could it have happened that the Modern movement, whose very foundation, as Wolfe emphasizes, was anticapitalist ("functionalism" in the language of the compounds meant "nonbourgeois," "socialist"), came to be rescued by groveling, fawning American capitalists? That's what needs explaining. Unfortunately Wolfe's anger is too white-hot for him to reflect on this matter, or even to get all his facts straight—which does not affect his case, but will damage reception of it.

He talks, for instance, about Gropius arriving in America "uprooted, exhausted, penniless . . . a refugee from a blighted land . . . " Well, now. Gropius came to Harvard on invitation; somebody there had decided Harvard was to "go Modern"; emissaries were sent to interview Modernism's leaders, among them Oud and Corbu; Gropius was chosen, rumor says, because he alone spoke understandable English. The real question is, *who* decided Harvard had a mission to rescue European Modernism? A useful inquiry, with broad applications—periodically, mysterious shifts occur in Ivy League attitudes that send all their poor little lambs astray in new directions, and sooner or later drag all the rest of us along after them.

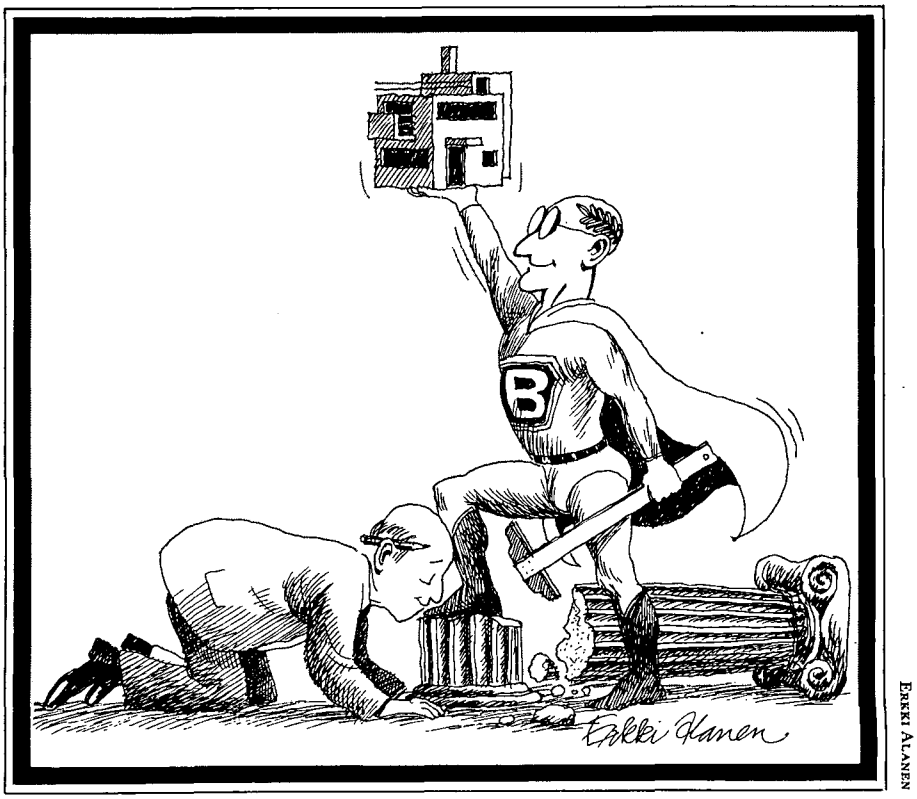
Missing, too, is reference to that failure of nerve brought on by the 1929 Crash, so well described in, for example, Schlesinger's *Crisis of the Old Order*. Despairing jobless, evicted farmers, apple-sellers who yesterday were millionaires, political and economic leaders in futile conference trying to ascertain what happened, all of them looking for some kind, any kind, of savior—surely the times had a lot to do with the Bauhaus blitz.

That the Bauhaus leaders acted, and were treated, like priests, Wolfe readily recognizes. He very appositely compares Colin Rowe defending the Whites and Scully championing the Greys to late medieval theologians frenetically arguing theology important or intelligible only to themselves. He calls Modernism a kind of "clerisy"—unconsciously (or perhaps consciously) drawing on George Orwell's "Benefit of Clergy" essay of 1936. But he does not relate this sort of priestcraft to the twentieth century's pervasive religion of science, which underlies and explains it.

Every field of twentieth-century activity has its White Gods who claim to rule in the name of scientific planning. Some actually wear white coats and work in labs. Others rule through a dictatorship of the proletariat—and not alone in Moscow or Peking. That's exactly how the Great and Little White Gods rule our arts—as a dictatorship claiming power by "scientific" representation of a working class whose culture they despise and whose individual members they never communicate with. (As Wolfe says, when tenants of the Pruitt-Igoe housing project were called in to discuss that project's future, it was a landmark in Modernism because never before had workers been consulted about working-class housing, yet working-class housing had been for fifty years the very heart of all Modernism.) Plainly, the Bauhaus blitz involves far broader issues than American colonialism.

According to Wolfe, the high art of architecture is in a hopeless mess. Well, what choice do we have? What is the alternative? We ask, but get no answer. Yet there is an alternative, inherent in the situation as he describes it.

If one thing is shared by all the clerisies of all the compounds, past and present, it is intense aversion to popular/commercial arts—to all those arts that have developed through the avant-garde reign, in order to meet the social needs neglected by the ascendancy. For they have everything that elitist avant-garde culture lacks, including, first and foremost, a vital relationship with the life of people at large. Venturi and his like have only played with "pop," according to Wolfe; they have not taken popular/commercial arts seriously, else they would have been run off the compound. Venturi, for example, will toy with "motifs" from speculative housing; he will not build a house that could be sold to a middle- or working-class customer. Yet popular/commercial arts provide a way out of that dead-end maze the avant-garde has gotten itself into. For they are visual manifestations of the claim of democratic (that is, American)



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society to grant as much equality as is consistent with individual freedom—in practice, a great deal of both.

By contrast, the culture of the compounds has been a visual manifestation of socialist claims to provide as much individual freedom as is compatible with equality—which in practice has turned out to be very little of either (Minimalist, one might say). Wolfe's book, seen in this context, can serve as a fine introduction, a compelling prolegomenon, to the study of popular/commercial arts and culture, about which he has already written so well. ❑

W. H. AUDEN, A Biography, by Humphrey Carpenter. Houghton Mifflin, 495 pp., $15.95.

Old master

PETER STANSKY

LIKE GEORGE ORWELL, W. H. Auden stipulated that no biography be written of him, but in neither case did the injunction appear to be founded on firm conviction. Orwell believed he had used so much of his own life in his writings that there was little purpose in further investigation, and, more seriously, he believed no biography could succeed in fully revealing the real person—which indeed is true, but is also true of any other form of revelation. Auden appeared to hold his belief about biography for the rather traditional and important reason that an artist should be known by his work. There is, in fact, no doubt that the work is by far the most significant aspect of an artist's life. But that does not mean that biography cannot perform two functions: to illuminate the work and to tell the tale (interesting in and of itself) of an individual—who happens in the case of Auden to be one of the greatest poets of the century.

Despite his injunction, Auden himself had rather mixed feelings about biographies. At times in some of his splendid essays he wrote approvingly of them; certainly he had a rich appreciation for the varieties of human nature. On the other hand, he did ask that all holders of correspondence destroy his letters—a request which, fortunately, quite a few disobeyed—and he himself was of very little assistance. He lived in a general state of disorder and chaos, and, probably in a vain attempt to reduce the confusion of his life somewhat, he didn't keep letters himself but threw them out as soon as he had no further use for them. At times he deliberately blurred his own history, as when in one version of his *Collected Poems* he had the poems printed in alphabetical order, although in later editions he was willing to present them chronologically.

Rather paradoxically, considering his feelings about the form, Auden's life has already generated quite a lot of biographical activity: a collection of essays edited by Stephen Spender, an unsatisfactory life by Charles Osborne, and now this unauthorized biography by Humphrey Carpenter (who wrote, however, with the permission of the estate and with access to much previously unavailable material). It is unlikely that another effort will be needed, at least for a long time. Carpenter has provided anyone interested in Auden's work with a careful, sympathetic, and apparently complete life. If anything, it is almost too dispassionate, too determined to be fair. Toward the end one almost feels that the author is getting a little impatient with his subject. He presents views favorable to the personality of the older Auden, but the dominant theme is of a man disoriented, dissatisfied, perhaps still writing well, devoted to his art, but ready to come to an end of his life at the comparatively early age of 66 (seeming much older, particularly with that extraordinary creviced face).

Here is essential background for the poetry. We have a fascinating portrait of a member of the English upper class, born in 1907, the third son of a doctor, educated in a proper upper-middle-class way at prep school, public school, and at Christ Church, Oxford, who in fact was so English that it was necessary for him to escape to America to free himself from his roots (bringing down obloquy upon himself because it was wartime), becoming an American citizen while clearly remaining an English poet, with many characteristics of his nation and his class. His life was full of doubts and travails; at the same time he was full of the extraordinary sense of authority of the upper-class Englishman, and he became increasingly dogmatic in his pronouncements—"your old mother says"—although presumably there was just a touch of irony, as when he said to Christopher Isherwood about his conversion to Vedanta, "My dear, it's simply *not* a gentleman's religion." He had an extraordinary range of knowledge and technical ability—he was a splendid machine for making poetry, and he adored writing in as many forms as possible. He taught by providing his students with a full awareness of the styles of poetry; he knew he couldn't teach inspiration. He was a custodian and enricher of the language.

Auden as an undergraduate at Oxford seemed to plan a takeover of English letters, and he and his friends—Isherwood, Spender, Warner, Day-Lewis, Lehmann, and others—did succeed in becoming the new and talked-about in the 1930s. Despite the fact that Auden's political period was comparatively brief (he came to believe that a poet could do nothing to change society) his depiction of a Depression landscape in his poetry, his sense of the need to search for a solution—be it either some form of psychology or politics—made his work deeply representative of the poetry of the age. True, his poetry is so good that it transcends its time. Still, for a sense of and feel for the political thirties we must turn to Auden and his picture of England, a country in which no one was well.

Carpenter assumes, in large part, Auden's importance as a poet. There is relatively little critical assessment here. He takes gentle issue with those who believe that the first half of Auden's work, written before he came to America, was better than the second, but he is not really concerned to argue the point: He leaves that to the critics, and primarily to Auden's literary executor, Edward Mendelson, who has in his definitive edition of *The English Auden*—poems, essays, and dramatic works—and in his critical work on that Auden, already done half the task superbly and promises to do the same for the second half.

TWO GREAT THEMES OF Carpenter's book, Christianity and homosexuality, almost overshadow the poetry. Carpenter has previously written on Jesus, C. S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and J. R. R. Tolkien. (I'm pleased to learn that Tolkien didn't care for Auden's characteristically dogmatic remark that he would consider no person literate who did not like Tolkien's writing.) The shape of the biography is largely determined, I believe, by Carpenter's interest in Auden's return to Christianity. He puts a fair amount of emphasis on Auden's early

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mystical experience while sitting on the lawn at the school at which he was teaching in June 1933, and he also is particularly interested in Auden's distress at the churches being closed—and frequently destroyed—in Loyalist Spain during the Civil War and at the treatment of the nuns and priests there. The return to Christianity was not a spectacular reconversion, but rather a quiet going to church while he was living in an extraordinary Brooklyn Heights menage, which at one time included Benjamin Britten, Carson McCullers, and Gypsy Rose Lee. But once Auden has reconverted, much of the rest of his life, in Carpenter's version, lacks biographical shape. The book then becomes primarily an insightful, deeply interesting quotidian chronicle.

Auden's love life reached its crisis shortly after his conversion. In fact, Auden happened to return to religion—perhaps by chance—when he found his

true love, but the dashing of his hopes of that happiness did not destroy his religious beliefs. Auden had a combination of guilt and joy in his homosexuality. He was quite unabashed in talking about it, although he was also a great believer in privacy, except in his last years, when he was surprisingly open in several interviews. Carpenter is far from prudish, and he is specific about Auden's preferences in bed and his use of call boys. All is coolly told, in a detached fashion—inevitably fascinating, but with an attempt not to feed any reader's prurience. Perhaps there is a subtle denigration; would a biographer be so specific regarding sexual acts in telling the life story of a heterosexual?

In his love life, as in other aspects, Auden was a fascinating combination. He was a liberator who was not at all diffident in seeking sexual satisfaction, frequently at teatime, and his cool indulgence perhaps made others feel freer to follow their instincts. At the same time he yearned for a stable married relationship, and he felt that he had found that with his American lover, Chester Kallman. He was devastated, almost murderous, when he discovered that Kallman was unfaithful. The relationship remained the central personal experience for the whole of the second half of Auden's life. Although after a while he also sought sexual pleasure elsewhere, Kallman, no longer his bed partner, remained the adored and central figure, however unworthy some of their mutual friends thought him to be. Auden was undoubtedly a difficult person to live with. He existed in seeming chaos, but believed passionately in order, and in imposing it upon others. Kallman described him as "the most dishevelled child of all disciplinarians." He demanded obedience even in sedition, as when he wrote in the student paper while teaching at Swarthmore, "Fellow Irresponsibles, follow me."

Famous, comparatively well-off (although worried about money), continuing to serve his art, he was yet lonely, even though Kallman spent part of the year with him. After the war he became less and less of an American resident, living first in Ischia and then in Austria for a good part of the year. Auden believed in the artist's need to disassociate himself from his roots, and yet in his last years he came back to live at Christ Church, Oxford. It didn't work: His search for a community, with its religious overtones—his return to the place where his career had really started—turned to dust. He may have enjoyed himself, with his endlessly repeated aphorisms, his holding forth, his drinking, the severe organization of his life, but as depicted here, his life was increasingly sad.

Fascinating as the story is, perhaps there was a sense in which Auden was right in his wish not to have a biography. The writings—poetry and prose—are what count, and we are helped here to understand their making. But the writings have a life of their own. Apart from them, as it were, is the life as it was lived. It has been well told here, with much material to document it, material skillfully used. Granting that the relationship to the poetry is the major justification of the life, we have, too, in Carpenter's book, the story of an English Christian Homosexual Eccentric, and that story is well worth reading, whether or not it happens to be about W. H. Auden. ❏

THE OXFORD BOOK OF AMERICAN LITERARY ANECDOTES, edited by Donald Hall. Oxford University Press, 360 pp., $15.95.

Rivalry, vanity, and drink

X. J. KENNEDY

MEETING THAT RAPIER-tongued wit Dorothy Parker in a doorway, Clare Booth Luce stepped aside. "Age before beauty," she said brightly. "Pearls before swine," snarled Parker, and breezed on through.

After years of pondering, self-centered Theodore Dreiser chose ahead of time his deathbed words: "Shakespeare, here I come!"

On a morning in 1909, Eugene O'Neill awoke in a flophouse, nursing a hangover, in bed with a woman he'd never seen before. "Who the hell are you?" he wanted to know. "You married me last night," answered the first Mrs. O'Neill.

That such literary gossip sometimes can be more revealing than literary criticism, Donald Hall's new book amply displays. These anecdotes illustrate, moreover, three of the book's central themes—themes that flow through our literary life as strongly and deliberately as the Mississippi—rivalry, vanity, and drink. As model, Hall acknowledges James Sutherland's *Oxford Book of Literary Anecdotes*, a great and delectable work that confines itself to English literature and concentrates, to a greater degree than Hall does, upon the story that shows the writer as author, rather than the writer as personality. Given Hall's apparent determination to regale us, only a curmudgeon, I believe, will complain.

If the flavor of Sutherland's book is that of old brandy, that of Hall's is more like Old Mr. Boston gin. Yet on Hall's side, it may be noted that Sutherland had a thousand years' worth of material

X. J. KENNEDY's latest book is an anthology, Tygers of Wrath: Poems of Hate, Anger, and Invective, *published by the University of Georgia Press.*

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to ferment, and took twenty-three years to assemble his book. Hall, with a mere three centuries of stuff to choose from, did his colossal job of distilling in only six. A poet who supplied the *Paris Review* with some of its best interviews, author of the biographical study *Remembering Poets*, Hall is undoubtedly the man for this job. His own personal values (hard work, good cheer, and loyalty) are borne out by his selections. I take it, for instance, that he condemns the dour and slothful Jack London, sprawling upon pillows and drinking scotch while his abused wife toils over a typewriter making sense of his pencil scrawl. This damning snapshot is followed immediately by another, capturing London's delight when his Korean houseboy calls him "Mr. God."

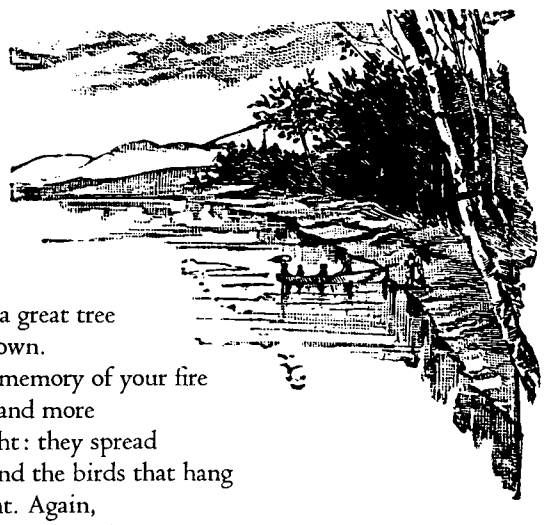
From Puritan beginnings to the death of Sylvia Plath, Hall ranges the course of our literature. Although the book's earlier sections will fascinate those acquainted with writers before the Revolution, they are less sprightly, naturally. Friskiness wasn't a trait of the Massachusetts Bay Colony's literary scene, and it is hard to find juicy stories about Cotton Mather. Things perk up greatly when we reach Mark Twain, who, when his infant nephew gives him a sweet and sloppy kiss, determines to "put up a monument to Herod"; and Emily Dickinson, whose way of shyly hiding out from company annoys her newspaperman friend Samuel Bowles. "Emily, you damned rascal!" Bowles thunders up the stairs. "No more of this nonsense! Come down at once!" Down she comes.

Some of the choicest anecdotes, however, are recent. There's a memorable tale of the aged James Thurber being sexually serviced by an obliging *New Yorker* secretary, while a young office boy named Truman Capote waits to help the blind humorist back into his socks. Then, too, it is hard to forget a bloodcurdling tale of voodoo: Shirley Jackson's making a wax doll of her publisher Alfred A. Knopf and sticking pins in it until Knopf, on a skiing excursion, breaks a leg. Certain stories are only magnificent quips. To his partner in a card game who asks, "Will you excuse me? I have to go to the men's room," George S. Kaufman acidly replies, "Gladly. For the first time today I'll know what you have in your hand."

But Hall hasn't compiled a mere joke-book for bookworms, for many of these inspired short-shorts pierce deep. Reading them, I became convinced that the peculiar bodily motions of writers reflect their writing styles—as in Rose Hawthorne's glimpse of Thoreau, Hawthorne, and Emerson skating together on the frozen Concord River: the first doing "dithyrambic dances and Bacchic leaps," the second moving "like a self-impelled Greek statue, stately and grave," the third "half lying on the air." When has more earnest criticism so beautifully summed up the character of three writers? That writers write as they walk seems clear, too, from a tale of Wallace Stevens told by Brendan Gill:

> Once, my sister, glancing out of a window, saw Stevens going by her house. As she watched, he slowed down, came to a stop, rocked in place for a moment or two, took a step backward, hestitated, then strode confidently forward—left, right, left, right—on his way to work. It was obvious to her that Stevens had gone back over a phrase, dropped an unsatisfactory word, inserted a superior one, and proceeded to the next line of the poem he was making.

The anecdote is more valuable than some book-length critical treatments of Stevens's aesthetics. And can it be that



Requiem for D.M.

In summer's heat, under a great tree
  I hear the hawks cry down.
The beauty of earth, the memory of your fire
  Tell of a year gone by and more
Bringing the leaves to light: they spread
  Between these words and the birds that hang
Unseen in predatory flight. Again,
  Your high house is in living hands
And what we were saying there is what was said.
  My body measures the ground beneath me
Warm in this beech-foot shade, my verse
  Pacing out the path I shall not follow
To where you spoke once with a wounded
  And wondering contempt against your flock,
Your mind crowded with eagerness and anger.
  The hawks come circling unappeasably. Their clangor
Seems like the energy of loss. It is hunger.
  It pierces and pieces together, a single note,
The territories they come floating over now:
  The escarpment, the foreshore and the sea;
The year that has been, the year to be;
  Leaf on leaf, a century's increment
That has quickened and weathered, withered on the tree
  Down into this brown circle where the shadows thicken.

Nocturnal

This cabin on our flight through space, this room
Windowed to westward, gathers the last light home:
The dial on Salzburg, as the soundwaves strike
The cat's ears twitch to the top notes of the Queen of Night.

Charles Tomlinson

Charles Tomlinson's most recent book of poems, The Flood, *is published by Oxford University Press. He is currently visiting professor of poetry at Princeton University.*

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the curious experience of Henry James, from around the root of whose tongue a doctor had to remove a long, entangling string bean, helps explain the laboriousness of those sentences that the great novelist dictated to his stenographer during his final, seemingly tongue-tied phase?

Merely browse in Hall's rich book, picking out the little hilarities, and you may wonder how such a nitwitted nationful of vain, jealous, posturing rummies possibly could have written American Literature. Read it through slowly, however, and you become convinced that our national classics are the work of human beings at least sporadically clever, decent, and wise. Playing chess with the Duchess of Bourbon, Benjamin Franklin captured her king. "Ah," said the French noblewoman, "we do not take kings so." "We do in America," Franklin replied.

KIPLING AND CONRAD: The Colonial Fiction, by John A. McClure. Harvard University Press, 182 pp., $16.50.

Lord Kim

EDWARD W. SAID

JOHN McCLURE'S STUDY IS the first devoted to Kipling and Conrad as writers of "colonial fiction." Both men, Conrad especially, have been the beneficiaries of a sizable scholarly industry; yet, having noted that until now no one has focused on the connection between the two writers and empire, McClure does not pause to ask why. This is by no means to say that McClure's book is superficial and uninteresting. It is neither, but its limits and even its considerable strengths say as much about contemporary literary studies in the university as they do about the book's subject.

The deprivations of Kipling's early years as an Anglo-Indian foster child lodged with a provincial family in England, the lingering inferiority he continued to feel, the clear-cut lines of domination and submission provided him in early maturity by British India—these are deftly characterized by McClure. In a series of brief chapters on Kipling's fiction, he then proceeds through a set of stories and novels, outlining the attitudes and the changes in attitude to be found there. At first Kipling uses the Indian setting to embody his own afflictions, his "imprinted fears of isolation and inadequacy," but in time these are resolved by sublimating them in the hierarchies of imperial rule. Inferior people are to be kept in their places, their "nightmares . . . to be nurtured and employed as internalized allies of social control." Higher up in the social hierarchy enforced by colonial rule are the administrators, officers, missionaries, journalists, and sometime writers for whom India's rich native treasures are a temptation on the one hand, and on the other a trap and a warning of threatened loss of position.

As he grew older Kipling transformed the impasse—as McClure shows quite brilliantly and economically—by creating the apparently benign but "disinfected" community portrayed in *The Jungle Book, Kim, Stalky & Co.,* and *Captains Courageous*, each of which, by the way, contains a much revised and idealized portrait of Kipling's miserable school years at the United Services College. In his analysis of the two most acclaimed of these works, McClure reveals Kipling's formula for secure imperial domination—how, through a carefully scheduled education, the India-born European (Mowgli and Kim) acquires skill in ruling a precisely ordered local *imperium*—and shows that for all its serenity Kim's India is an antiliberal utopia, a colony contaminated neither by sentiments of independence nor by fears of abandonment by the metropolitan power.

McClure says about this prefiguring of the Algerian *pied noir* and white Rhodesian position, "Part of this transformation [of India] is legitimate, for Kipling's theme is that to a country-born-and-bred European India is a familiar home, not a foreign prison. But much of the transformation involves a gigantic act of imaginative disinfection. Kipling simply wipes out, erases from his picture of India, all those groups and forces that were making life there in his time difficult for any imperialist, country-born or not. . . . [Thus] all of Kim's enemies come from beyond the border of British India. Within these borders, all is amity. Such was not the case, of course. . . ."

"Of course" is hardly the correct phrase here. Read even a supposedly "political" and progressive critic like Irving Howe on *Kim*, and you would not suspect that the novel was about a colony seething with conflict and contradictions, portrayed instead as serenely playing "the Great Game." For Howe, Kipling's novel is essentially about the pleasures of "being," which is an index of how successful Kipling's fantasy of boyhood life is with professional critics. Unlike McClure, who correctly interprets the novel's ultimate softness as an act of the deepest sort of wish-fulfillment, Howe admits to Kipling's lack of rigor but suggests without a trace of irony that Kipling's political failure lies in not portraying India's poverty! Imperialism, colonial rule, racial discrimination, and economic exploitation do not get the merest nod of recognition from Howe, who has adopted as his current literary guide to the Third World V. S. Naipaul, Kipling's heir in lamenting the past glories of colonization.

But if McClure's successful account of Kipling gets its strength from an honest personal awareness of the larger imperial setting within which Kipling worked, his view of Conrad is, I think, flawed by that too limited and naive awareness. True, Conrad traveled the British East and even grew up in parts of Eastern Europe colonized by the Polish landowning minority to which his family belonged. Nevertheless, Conrad's mind was more complex than Kipling's and his art much subtler, so much so that "colonial fiction" simply cannot cover what goes on in his extraordinarily difficult narratives. Kipling used fiction to ease the pain of his childhood memories and to make imperial British India an insulated home for uninterrupted repose and uninhibited, albeit decorous, aggression (against lower forms of life, natives especially). Fiction and biogra-

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phy complement each other perfectly in Kipling's case. For Conrad, however, fiction was stimulated only at the outset by biography, with the result that Conrad's art far exceeded the simple anecdotal data of his life. His was a restless skeptical mind with a distinctly pioneering cast; he used his fiction to explore realms of experience and thought only hinted at by his actual past or by a factual knowledge of colonialism.

An example of Conrad's prescience is confirmed by Jean Stengers's recent study of Leopold II of the Belgians as an imperialist, collected in Roger Owen's and Bob Sutcliffe's *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism* (1972). Most of the private papers and diaries used by Stengers (who does not seem to be familiar with Conrad's work) could not have been known to Conrad when he wrote *Heart of Darkness*, yet there is an uncanny spiritual and intellectual resemblance between Kurtz and Leopold as human beings. Kurtz's ambition, his strange combination of greed and grandiose altruism, his moral refinement, and his unrestrained private projections for the Congo—these have remarkable, almost exact verbal parallels in Leopold. Neither of the two men was a strict economic imperialist, and Conrad's achievement was to have put into words so accurately the kind of mentality that an age of imperialism might have produced, and in Leopold's case actually did produce, unknown to Conrad. To reduce Conrad's achievement, as McClure does, simply to an accurate *description* of imperialism is to miss the enormous force of Conrad's creation of the imperialist mind, a creation proving Wilde's dictum that reality imitates art.

CONRAD'S EARLY AND LEAST ambitious fiction—*Almayer's Folly, An Outcast of the Islands,* and *The Rescue*—comes the closest in form and substance to Kipling's work. As a result, McClure's analysis of these works is sound. Beginning with *Lord Jim*, however, he lets Conrad slip away from him almost completely. The chapters on *Heart of Darkness* and *Nostromo* are written as if Conrad were a slightly morbid version of Kipling, and by the end of the book, when McClure has very little to say about Conrad except that he was a conservative anti-imperialist, an air of despondent failure hangs over McClure's cursory writing.

It is not only that he has absolutely nothing to say about Conrad's astonishing formal innovations in narrative technique, or that he ignores all analyses of Conrad's nihilism, his radical epistemological explorations, and his dark cosmological broodings, or that he continues to suggest that the novels are only a passive reflection of historical reality. What is dismaying is his assumption that Conrad's novels form a self-contained entity usable without necessary reference to the complex realities of colonialism and imperialism. In this naiveté McClure shares an assumption of his field and mine, academic literary scholarship—an assumption that good, sensitive readings of literature can stand on their own. Why? Because *literature* is different from *politics* even when, irony of ironies, the critic deals with an essentially political literature.

What I am talking about, then, is a set of self-imposed limits that cripples criticism to an unacceptable degree. On the simplest level in McClure's case it means not seeming to know the slightest thing about the vast literature on imperialism and colonialism. This is not a matter of bibliographical pedantry. Beyond its biographical resonance, was Kipling's colonial fiction an illustration of the reality? Did it go against most other colonial fiction? Was it useful in maintaining or diminishing the empire? These are questions one cannot ask, let alone answer, unless one has studied the material in D. K. Fieldhouse's work on the colonial empires, V. G. Kiernan's *Lords of Human Kind*, A. P. Thornton's *The Imperial Idea and Its Enemies*, or such documents as John Hobson's book on imperialism. Yet literary critics avoid such works, to say nothing of the works of Frantz Fanon, Immanuel Wallerstein, Gunder Frank, and Harry Magdoff, because they believe that students of literature are accredited to study literature, and not politics, economics, or history. This absolute division of labor has kept critics from studying Kipling and Conrad as writers of colonial fiction, and it has made McClure's a partial treatment of the subject. No wonder, then, that McClure does not stop to inquire why until now no book has been written on the relationship between colonialism and high literature.

For underneath that unexplored relationship is a set of questions dogging academic scholarship now as it must have dogged the novelists then: To what extent is fiction during an imperial era part of imperialism itself? How is it possible to write novels about colonialism (or to write a literary history of colonialism) without at the same time participating in colonialism? Is culture innocent of so massive a system of domination and profit, or is it really an integral aspect of that system, making its indecent cruelties, its monumental plunder and oppression, its deeply inhuman treatment of other human beings, appear to be palatable, normal, and "realistic"? These questions seem like the crucial ones to me. Even if no ready answers for them are at hand, one can permit oneself retrospective misgivings about colonialism without at the same time remaining "just" a careful close reader of purely literary texts. This is something McClure does not seem to have considered, and his book shows it. But until the cloistered institutions of literary study are opened to the (usually) nasty world that made them possible in the first place, the confining walls will allow intelligent young critics to go on separating, laundering, and prettifying both realms. So long as the two realms live off each other secretly, then more purely literary and nonpolitical books will be written, and colonialism will continue to seem merely a good subject for a modest essay. ❑

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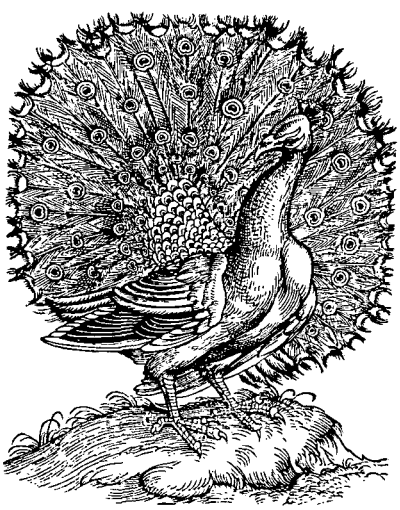

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FILM

New York film festival

STEPHEN HARVEY

THE NEW YORK FILM FESTival has always possessed a particular cachet that no rival American event can quite match. Part of its distinction, of course, is just an accident of geography and civic boosterism, since everyone who lives and works between SoHo and 96th Street (including the press) knows that this is the artistic hub of the globe and any film festival programmed here must be the apex of its kind. Just as important is the Festival Committee's much-vaunted reputation for choosiness. New York's annual film buffet never indulges in the excesses associated with, say, Los Angeles's Filmex, which unspools practically every reel of film exposed to light from Hong Kong to the Ivory Coast during the preceding calendar year. At Lincoln Center, just over two dozen programs, retrospectives included, are assembled each year, leading to the widespread assumption that these and only these are the filmic achievements worth noting since the last gathering of the faithful.

Casual attendees may manage to take that notion at face value—after all, they have the option of being even more selective than the festival organizers. Less easily persuaded are those professionally compelled to camp out for the duration in the wooded expanses of Alice Tully Hall. The conditions under which they toil aren't exactly conducive to swoons of excitement. For two weeks, they endure 10 a.m. press screenings, which are spent prying eyelids apart, scribbling illegible notes on spiral pads, and balancing clandestine coffee containers out of the range of the laser-beam flashlights aimed by the hall's employees (trained to view the press as only a tad less sneaky than the crowd you'd encounter on Rikers' Island).

Yet the disaffection among many of these film journalists is more than simple battle fatigue. After the third or fourth tongue-clucking, talking-head documentary with the guts to come right out and tell us that mental patients mustn't be mistreated, or that the dastardly KKK must be squelched, on top of the opening-night enshrinement of *Chariots of Fire*, that starched-collar *Rocky*, a few doubts about the selection process begin to dawn. Francesco Rosi's *Tre Fratelli*, both a rueful celebration of human continuity and a despairing vision of Italy's current political morass, was the most completely satisfying film I've seen from any quarter this year. After its Cannes premiere, it was offered to the New York Festival, which evidently found it somehow wanting—unlike, say, Antonioni's *Il Mistero di Oberwald*, which turns a second-rate Cocteau play (*L'Aigle à Deux Têtes*) into a fifth-rate Hammer horror film with a pretentious color scheme (pistachio faces, electric-yellow landscapes). *Tighten Your Belts, Bite the Bullet*—a shrill and static lecture (and I do mean lecture) on the pernicious role of the banks in the recent fiscal crises in Cleveland and New York—would scarcely have passed muster in a PBS Sunday-afternoon slot opposite ABC's "Wide World of Sports." So what in the world was it doing in a prominent berth at Lincoln Center?

Two of this year's direst entries shared at least one discernible function—to play up to the rarefied, vicarious groupiedom that thrives in New York like nowhere else I can think of. Instead of rockers from Styx, the objects of this brand of adulation are recherché artistes with a taste for martyrdom and a flair for self-promotion. Both Wim Wenders's ***Lightning over Water*** and Louis Malle's ***My Dinner with Andre*** packed a double whammy: Not only did they focus on sure-fire subjects for this sort of cultural beatification, but each was directed by a film maker with unimpeachable claims to idolatry.

Lightning over Water pays tribute to Nicholas Ray, or more accurately, to Wenders's own tender reverence for the benighted director of *Rebel without a Cause*, here captured (trapped?) in the last agonies of his bout with terminal cancer. Narrated by Wenders in a terse, tough-guy mode possibly induced by too many viewings of Philip Marlowe films, *Lightning over Water* is a self-important exploitation movie. Avidly lingering over Ray's emaciated features

My Dinner with Andre

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to record his halting, pain-benumbed utterances, it proceeds to goad its semi-comatose star into playing King Lear games for the camera while Wenders drones on about Ray's dignity and eloquence to the last. No doubt Ray was grateful for the attention and the company—in fact, was probably used to it, since his last fifteen years were largely spent in the company of worshipful students and professional disciples. But then, the subject's willing complicity is an alibi all too dear to those documentarists who know an exhibitionistic model when they see one. If Ray was too far gone to realize what a ravaged, helpless apparition would be presented to the film's eventual audience, shouldn't the ever-solicitous Wenders have stepped in and spared him that final humiliation beyond the grave? Periodically during the film, Wenders does voice qualms about the ethics of the project, but these testaments to self-doubt scarcely absolve him of responsibility. *Lighting over Water*'s supporting players—Wenders, his pals, and technicians—are last seen whooping it up at a post-mortem party on a sailboat in New York harbor. Inadvertently, this is the grisliest scene in the movie. Freed at last from their sycophantic rigors, these vultures can finally let go and savor the memory of their scavengings.

MY DINNER WITH ANDRE isn't really loathsome, merely anesthetizing. It's a self-penned valentine to the incessant quest for truth and fulfillment on the part of Andre Gregory and Wallace Shawn, two sacred calves in the Manhattan lively-arts corral. Among the aesthetically upwardly mobile, Shawn and Gregory are names to be conjured with, despite their fairly scanty resumés. Gregory's principal repute rests on his experimental staging of *Alice in Wonderland* a decade ago; Shawn's stems from his authorship of two plays mounted at the Public Theater and La MaMa, his cameo as Diane Keaton's creepy first husband in *Manhattan*, and his personal literary pedigree as the son of *New Yorker* editor William Shawn. In between these displays of creativity, evidently, they've both been storing up deathless pensées on life, art, and their own relation to same.

We get to hear the lot, fashioned into a two-hour duologue over aperitifs and quail at a tony New York restaurant. Suave, sonorous-voiced Gregory is the more garrulous of the two; recently beset by a mid-life crisis, he offers up an awed account of a mystical happening he organized with the Grotowski theatrical troupe in the woods outside Warsaw. After we've digested that, he's off musing about mankind's untapped primal instincts, his quest for spirituality, and the aridity of our contemporary cultural life (considering what we've been witnessing, I'll drink to that). One of this movie's main conceits is that you're never sure whether the Andre and Wally characters Malle records are fictional constructs or reflections of their real selves or something between the two—a moot point as far as I'm concerned. Like other self-absorbed intellectuals with time on their hands and anomie on the brain, the celluloid Andre tends to overdramatize his own dilemmas and then inflate them into monstrous generalizations on the human condition. When he intoned his claim that the alienation suffered by modern man could give the Holocaust a run for its money, I longed to track down Ray Bradbury and ask him to time-warp Gregory back for a weekend in Bergen-Belsen, to see how he liked it.

Perched restlessly on his chair like a bald chipmunk, Shawn occasionally interjects a note of Bohemian common sense during Gregory's rare pauses for reflection. Shawn's faith is rooted in the prosaic but tangible comforts of daily life—a cup of coffee, a danish, and an amorous fiancée. There's a dim flame of self-irony flickering somewhere in *My Dinner with Andre*, but it's extinguished by the complementary gusts of guff emanating from its author-interpreters. The fact that this movie has been so widely lauded as a work of audacity, wit, and revelation only indicates to me how terrified some people are to be caught with their philistine's trousers down in the presence of an Important Work.

The Hungarian-German ***Mephisto*** provided an inadvertent counterpoint to *My Dinner with Andre*—a portrait of a hubris-ridden theatrical artist whose tunnel-visioned ambition propels him into worldly success and private purgatory. Based on Klaus Mann's roman à clef about Nazi actor Gustav Grundgens, *Mephisto* traces the rise of its frenzied protagonist, Hendrik Hofgen, from provincial matinee idol during the Weimar years to director of the Berlin State Theater under the Hitler regime. His greatest onstage triumph is as a prancing, sepulchral Mephistopheles, but behind the scenes, Hofgen has a far closer affinity with Faust. He's a chameleon who can adopt any ideological hue almost without thinking; any means can be rationalized if it cinches the adulation that nourishes him. Publicly nurtured yet subtly suffocated by the Nazi establishment, Hofgen's adherence to the egoist's creed inevitably steers him into the hollowest role of his career—the Fatherland's most prized cultural marionette.

Blier's film is a role-reversal Lolita yarn played for queasy comedy and slapstick pathos.

The script, by Peter Dobai and director Istvan Szabo, occasionally strains to replicate the literary flourishes of its source, but in Hofgen the writers have crafted an absorbing figure divided against himself, more mercurial victim than willful malefactor. Klaus Maria Brandauer inhabits the role with unnerving intensity, mating the lithe magnetism of a born theatrical heartthrob with the glacial inward stare of a self-intoxicated obsessive. Szabo could have used some of that flamboyant moxie himself. As a director, he seems content to frame his star as artfully as possible, while doggedly covering the tracks left by the turns in the scenario. *Mephisto* doesn't evoke the milieu that exalts Hofgen with much precision or vigor; it's as though Szabo thought *any* period trappings would do, provided they were archaic and photogenic. It's tempting to speculate what the young Bertolucci or Visconti in his prime might have done with this material. As it is, *Mephisto*'s panoramic ambitions are somewhat stunted by Szabo's well-meaning but circumscribed vision.

THE FILM FESTIVAL IS often accused of rampant Francophilia, and, as usual, entries from France dominated the selection this year. There were ten in all, if you included coproductions with Italy and Morocco and two shortish films by the U.S.-based expatriate, Agnes Varda.

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The most striking thing about the more prominent Gallic films was the way time has tempered and, in some instances, reversed the priorities of France's former young generation of film makers. (Not, however, the eternally sophomoric Jacques Rivette, whose *Le Pont du Nord* is another of his Quaaludes-and-metaphors chases across Paris.) Directors like Truffaut and, somewhat later, Bertrand Blier first won attention with their freewheeling, elusive themes and characters, and the ragged vitality of their styles. However, both Blier's ***Beau Père*** and Truffaut's ***La Femme d'à Côté*** coolly navigate past the worn signposts left by earlier generations of mainstream film makers, keeping the machinery lubricated with a high-grade sheen of professionalism. Past Blier films such as *Get Out Your Handkerchiefs* and *Going Places* were often maddeningly oblique, with their eccentric notions of male bonding and inscrutable female insatiability. Blier seemed to be puzzling out his own feelings for these characters (never mind their motivations) as their stories passed before our eyes, and his own uncertainty was part of what made these films so provocative.

No such untoward jolts are in store from *Beau Père*, despite its mildly startling theme—every shift of emotion and plot has been calmly weighed and measured, then suspended in the aspic of Blier's artful camera compositions. This is a role-reversal Lolita yarn played for queasy comedy and slapstick pathos. An indolent jazz pianist (Patrick Dewaere) loses his lover in a freak car accident and resolves to raise her 15-year-old daughter (Ariel Besse), over the objections of the girl's dissolute absentee father (Maurice Ronet, bloated and rheumy eyed almost beyond the call of duty). The girl is delighted, because, as it turns out, her devotion for Dewaere goes considerably beyond the filial. Her passive, jittery foster parent holds out for as long as he can, vainly protesting that he's too young to be a dirty old man—but the girl's determination is implacable, and the sad-eyed Dewaere eventually succumbs.

Their liaison unfolds with the facile predictability of a boulevard farce, only played straight (more or less), and Blier's tone is imperturbably matter-of-fact throughout. (If anything, *Beau Père* turns into a wistful fantasy of a world in which all pubescent damsels have a yen for their elders, and conduct themselves accordingly. By the end, when Dewaere's new stepdaughter from his second marriage gets that telltale haze in her eyes, you practically expect the soundtrack to break into a chorus of "Thank Heaven for Little Girls.") Dewaere is a touchingly flaccid figure who looks as though all the flesh in his face had been worn away by the combined toll of mourning, longing, and fatigue. Like most of Blier's past heroines, Ariel Besse masks unslakable, unfathomable instincts—all those hormones, no doubt—behind a tabula rasa face. *Beau Père* has a sensuously polished look, in a perplexingly old-fashioned mode; the Cinemascope lens glides fleetly past light-dappled interiors that reek of sound-stage fabrication, as anguished piano crescendos surge in the background, just like some Jane Wyman problem picture of the fifties. Maybe this was a strategy Blier employed to keep himself (and us) at a remove from a subject with which he all too clearly identifies. All of which tends to make patness out of perversity, even though this movie remains an arresting object for contemplation.

Beau Père

LIKE HIS ENORMOUSLY POPular *Le Dernier Metro*, Truffaut's *La Femme d'à Côté* seems designed from a blueprint for would-be masterpieces—you take a story quintessentially French in its details but universally applicable in its grand design, populate it with the most attractive vedettes at your disposal, lavish seamlessly-composed music and images on the lot, *et voilà*! *La Femme d'à Côté* has kilograms of class, but that isn't enough to make it a classic; it's too claustrophobically controlled for that, too avid to pass the twin goalposts of impressiveness and accessibility. Truffaut's premise is one of the most primal of all celluloid formulas—an illicit affair that utterly consumes its protagonists, while scarring the hapless bystanders on the periphery. Gerard Depardieu plays a complacent married man living on the outskirts of Grenoble who is chagrined to discover that by a caprice of fate, the house next door has been let to a likewise wedded woman (Fanny Ardant) with whom he had had an explosive liaison some years before. A series of mutual feints and retreats leads inexorably to the resumption of their affair, and from there, of course, to Liebestod, all to the accompaniment of a turbulent, fate-ridden score by Georges Delerue, pleasantly reminiscent of Miklos Rosza in his *Spellbound* period.

Nearly every sequence has a Fabergé-egg patina of visual refinement and scrupulous care—perhaps not the most useful quality in a film purportedly about visceral passion and uncontrollable instincts. Truffaut's dexterity is undeniable, but the more resourceful he becomes, the greater is his penchant for calculated, choreographic set pieces—the desperate Depardieu grappling with the elusive Ardant, framed by the picture window of her living room in full view of her houseguests outside on the lawn. Completing the neat symmetry of the package is Truffaut's Greek chorus of one, who narrates the saga—a stoic, generous middle-aged woman (Veronique Silver) herself literally maimed by love in her youth. She's seen and been through it all, but like Piaf, she regrets nothing, and says so. The inclusion of this symbol of *sagesse* for dramatic counterpoint is the ultimate knowing touch in a film that hardly needed one. None

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of this would have mattered if Truffaut had blessed his ill-starred lovers with some untoward traits or impulses, anything to give flesh to these archetypes. But the two are so emblematic they verge on abstraction; it's not desire that propels them to their doom so much as racial memory, passed down in the chromosomes inherited from decades of movie lovers consigned to oblivion for heeding their lusts instead of their consciences.

After the Truffaut and the Blier, maybe it shouldn't have been surprising that the French film with the most conspicuous signs of life was the most apparently artless of them all. Eric Rohmer's ***La Femme de l'Aviateur*** is a mere doodle next to such past achievements as *Ma Nuit chez Maud* and *Die Marquise von O*, but it shares with these his rare gift for capturing the essence of human contradiction; his people are constantly transforming themselves before our eyes, showing that the more we learn about each other, the deeper is the private reservoir that may never be fathomed by anyone else. *La Femme de l'Aviateur* is astonishingly simple in outline, and so unembellished visually that a lot of people will doubtless find it a trial to sit through. It's a kind of cinéma-vérité *La Ronde*, unfolding over a span of twenty-four hours. François, a whey-faced law student and postal clerk, is spurned by his moody fiancée Anne, who feels suffocated by his constant solicitude. He sets off across Paris to follow the tracks of Anne's ex-lover, the cause of much of her turbulence, and in the process encounters a captivating lycée student, Lucie, who playfully joins him in the chase. Back at his fiancée's cramped furnished room, François and Anne exchange high-pitched accusations and mumbled endearments, their relationship as unresolved as ever. On his way home he decides to pursue his acquaintance with the young girl he met that afternoon, and just before he reaches her doorstep, François sees Lucie giving a good-night embrace to none other than his pal at the post office.

All of which may be insignificant, but there's not a false or forced note in it. Not for the first time in his work, Rohmer's camera tends to settle down in a corner for a snooze while his characters pace and ponder and chat about apparent trivialities. Rohmer doesn't prod us to love or loathe or even understand his characters—he just freezes them in an affectionate but objective middle distance, allowing the audience to do some of the work for a change and draw its own conclusions. And these are bound to be a little complicated; for all his peach-fuzz sweetness, the ardent hero is every bit as obtuse as Anne thinks he is, and her callousness is a blind for her own anguish. Lucie's most conspicuous quality is the amusement she gets from her own delightfulness. (If anybody has a right to be enchanted with herself, it's Anne-Laure Meury, who plays the part; she's wonderfully reminiscent of the vibrant *jeunes filles* Danielle Darrieux played in her saucy youth.) A movie whose characters reflect some of the resonance and imperfections of life shouldn't be such a rare phenomenon. But the way things are, under its gentle, inconsequential surface, Rohmer's movie seems positively to seethe with daring.

It took films by Poland's most celebrated film makers, Andrzej Wajda and Krzysztof Zanussi, and a scabrously funny movie about gay life in West Berlin to give the festival some momentum and excitement—more about them next time. ❑

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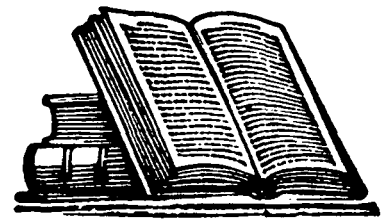

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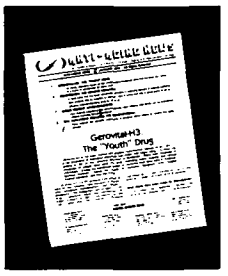

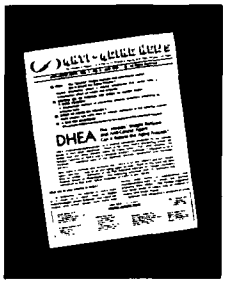

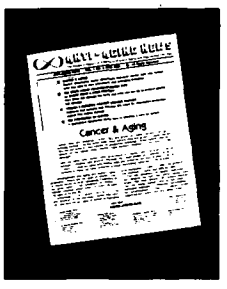

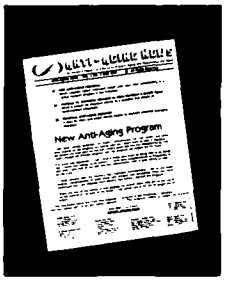

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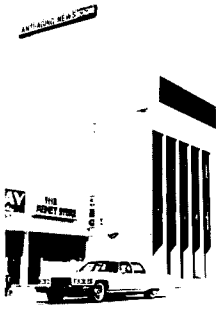

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